

CHARIVARIA

IN a week when Mr. Bulganin was appealing so movingly for improved East-West cultural relations it was disappointing to learn that West Germany had refused a visit by Moscow State Circus. It should have been made clear to the Bonn authorities that this is not the one that toured Britain a year ago.

No Rest for the Propagandist

SIGNS that the iron curtain countries have their civic as well as national problems appear in the news leaflet



raids on Warsaw by road-safety campaigning aircraft showering citizens with the slogan "Orderliness in Traffic is Proof of Culture in a Population." This is said to sound so well in Polish that it is to be adapted for use in an impending anti-litter drive.

Amazing Moderation

IN general the Press has been fairly tolerant towards Mr. Thorneycroft's redistributions in the Treasury cash box. It had been widely expected, especially among regular readers of the Law Reports, that leading articles would deplore the absence of any proposals to tax as earned income the damages awarded to authors in newspaper libel actions.

African Know-How

ANYONE who doubted the wisdom of granting self-government to Ghana will feel rather foolish now that Mr. Alport, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, has told

the Commons that our two countries have agreed "to give each other technical assistance on a mutual basis." The incoming contribution will not consist, as cynics may readily assume, of secret information about cocoa-processing, but of assistance "in the study of scientific and technical tropical problems of concern to us and the Colonies"—and will no doubt include useful hints on how to grant any remaining Colonies self-government.

Egg Laid on Duck Island

MR. DULLES' recent reference to "nations whose leaders feel that newly-acquired sovereign rights have to be displayed by flouting other independent nations" was interpreted by many, says a report, as "an oblique condemnation of President Nasser." Isolated carpers in the older democracies insist on interpreting it as an oblique condemnation of Mr. Dulles.

Free Love Note

NEWS that a telephone weather forecasting service is now to be installed



with special information about coastal towns, so that, as Mr. Marples puts it, the subscriber will "be able to decide whether to take his wife or girl friend" out for the day, has been enthusiastically received by British individualists. At least they're being allowed to choose which.

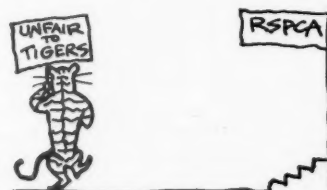
Great Bare

CONCERN is reported at the American end of the *Mayflower II* route because

commemorative medallions designed in Britain for the occasion depict two pilgrims stripped unpuritanically to the waist. It is pointed out on this side that the design is only symbolic, and in fact underestimates the degree of stripping pre-imposed on any modern settler bound for the New World.

Non-Democracy Note

AFTER attacking a tiger on a Malayan rubber estate and enabling it to be hunted and killed, a champion



pointer bitch has received an award from the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. And no doubt the tiger's skin has been laid inside as a rug.

Gravy Training

AT a time when everyone was pre-occupied with arranging for that better world in which our kiddies shall grow up it was right for the Minister of Education to order an inquiry into the schools meals service, and the resulting report reveals, among other painstakingly garnered facts, that many children avoid school dinners because they "have not been brought up to like the type of meal provided." What is left unclear is whether this is a criticism of the upbringing or the meal.

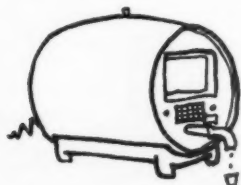
Pass the Pickled Strontium

THE free Asian nations have not been able to make much sense of Mr. Macmillan's assurance that the Christmas Island explosions will benefit them "as much as the nations of the

West." What he meant, no doubt, was that free Asian homes would at last taste the advantages of really thoroughly scrubbed vegetables.

Coming Attraction

TEMPERANCE organizations are planning feverishly as a result of the report by the Brewers' Association that the



British drinker is now drinking more heavily than ever—but in front of his television set at home. By the time colour TV is here the anti-liquor campaigners will be all ready to hit back with half-minute I.T.A. stills of rainbow-hued livers.

Coroner's Friend

SIXTEEN hundred American airliners are to be equipped with an automatic log known as a flight recorder, which will register everything that happens to the machine in flight, take infallible notes of air speed, altitude, acceleration, air turbulence and direction, and withstand fire, water and impact, thus giving accident investigators the answer "in types of disaster which have been a mystery." All that's lacking is some unobtrusive means of getting itself a mention in the airlines' cosy publicity pamphlets.

Hungarian Rhapsody

"Paradicsom—paradise; tomato."

Hungarian Dictionary

NOT till the ill wind blew from Budapest

A human tide of speech strange and staccato

Should I have dreamed that any tongue possessed

The selfsame noun for "paradise" and "tomato."

Aided by this linguistic ambiguity

The Russian conquerors have naught to dread;

Even Hungarians of least acuity

Know that when ripe a paradise is red.

FORWARD FROM SPEIDEL

GOING too little too late is, as is widely known, one of the things that repeatedly gets us all into trouble, which is why it is none too soon to inquire just what exactly is being done to push ahead with what may be called the Speidel Situation at a proper rate of speed.

This is no time for complacency.

No one would deny that the placing of British troops on the European continent under the command of a seasoned German officer, and the spectacle of a French military band playing *Deutschland über Alles* in his honour, were matters for justifiable satisfaction. Everyone could see that progress was being made.

But it must be frankly admitted that in many quarters there has been a tendency to behave as though all reasonable objectives had now been achieved, to relax with the comfortable conviction that once a genuine German has been put in charge of the Franco-British forces peace and goodwill are assured.

To do so is sadly to underestimate the demands which the international situation makes of us.

It was, or should have been, obvious at the outset that to make such an arrangement unilaterally must be bound to produce serious repercussions in, for instance, Tokio. And this is what has now occurred.

To a proud and sensitive people like the Japanese, acutely conscious as they are of their place in the van of civilization, it is clearly intolerable that in the year 1957 no single Japanese officer is in command of any sizable body of British or French troops anywhere. It is a slur not only on the reputation of the Japanese as the "peacemakers of Asia" but also on the Japanese Army. Is it suggested that among those who so ably conducted the invasion of, for instance, Burma, there are not commanders at least as well qualified as those who gained their experience under Wilhelm II and Adolf Hitler?

To argue that there are not sufficient British or French forces within easy reach of Japan to make it worth a Japanese general's while to command them is a mere quibble. At this moment the governorship of Hongkong is in the hands of a British subject—a circumstance which has already given rise to sharp and, it is to be feared, well-grounded criticism by members of the Afro-Asian bloc.

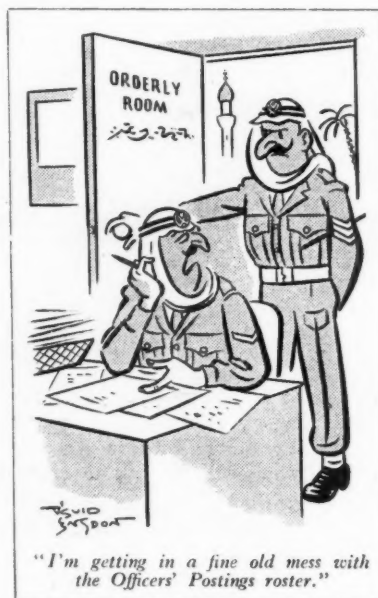
The least that should be done—and it is a gesture which would do much to restore our prestige in the Orient, where such gestures are highly appreciated—is to hand over the governorship with a minimum of delay to some high-ranking Japanese officer.

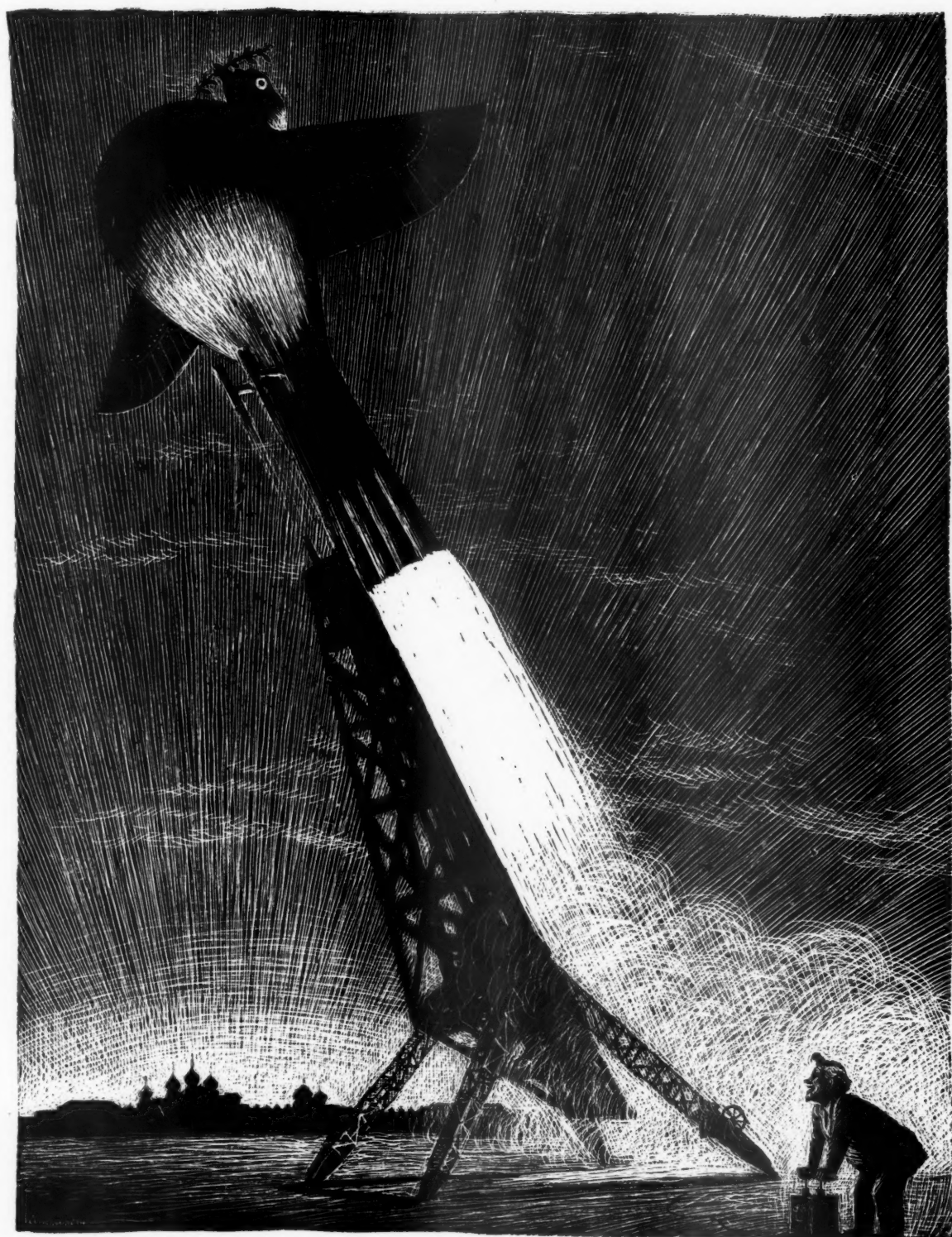
But all these measures must be regarded in the light of stop-gaps.

Far more imaginative policies are required if the injured feelings of Germans, Japanese and others are to be assuaged and a climate of international goodwill created. For example, why should not some part of the Home Forces be officered by Germans?

To argue that British military organizations in these islands are already fully occupied by Americans is a mere quibble. It cannot be doubted for a moment that if the appeal were made in a proper spirit of humility, with all precautions taken to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the United States Congress, President Eisenhower, with that flair for the generous gesture which has won him respect everywhere from Cairo to Port Said, would be prepared to sanction an arrangement for the sharing of military control in Britain between the American and German forces.

C. C.





THE GUIDED DOVE

World Premières I Have Known

By ALEX ATKINSON

I AM not concerned here with whether or not M. Jean Genet should have been banned last week from the world *première* of his own play, because on the face of it it doesn't seem to be any of my business: but the incident has reminded me of two of my world *premières*, for they too raise grave questions about the dramatist's place in the theatre.

The first occurred at a twice-nightly rep in a northern town full of tram-lines, because my agent said the fewer the London managements who saw it the better for all concerned. It was the first world *première* I'd ever had

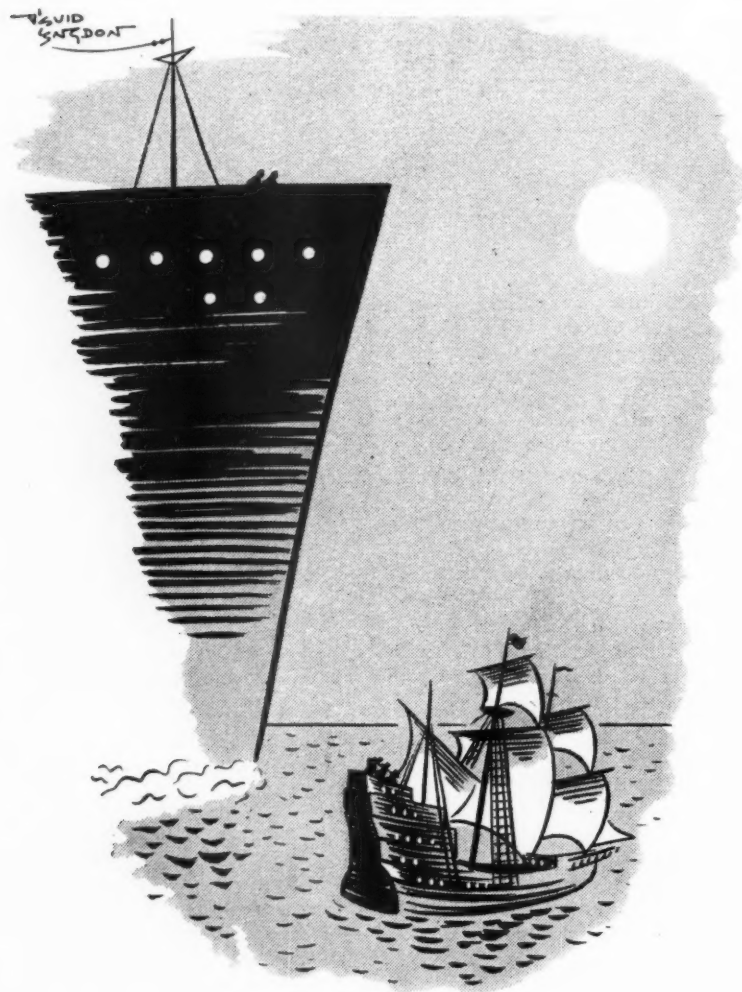
anywhere, and the name of the play was *Ask Your Ma*, or *Maud's Night Out*, or something like that. I travelled a couple of hundred miles in my best suit for the opening, which happened to fall on August Bank Holiday, and when I made myself known, with some difficulty, at the box office, the manager said "I don't care if you're George Bernard Short himself, you don't come barging in here Bank Holiday Monday and get any free seat off me, lad."

Now it seems to me that this sort of thing largely explains why playwrights so often turn out to be furtive, yellowish men with nervous stammers.

I, for example, begged this manager's pardon, paid my four and six, and sat in Row S next to an old lady who came every week as regular as clockwork. She kept asking me what the actors were saying, on account of crumbs in her deaf-aid, and she went home in the second interval, explaining that she'd seen the play before, when she was a little girl.

I have never needed a deaf-aid, but I still found the whole production baffling. Two of my pet characters never set foot on the stage at all. The action passed in Blackpool instead of Cheltenham. There was no staircase. Lines of a humorous nature had been incorporated in the text, frequently with some local significance which passed me by. The maid, for whom I had written no dialogue, seeing her merely as a vague blur bringing in the tea-things, contrived to bump comically into someone every time she entered, and say "Oops!" The hero's aged grandmother was played by an eager seventeen-year-old with a *Smilin' Thru* wig and some blacked-out teeth. Every speech of more than six lines had had its middle removed. The F.P. was U.L. instead of D.R., the French window led straight into a tropical jungle, the only cigar in the play turned out to be a Woodbine, the dramatic *scène-à-faire* towards the end had been replaced by a quick-fire cross-talk act between three minor characters who weren't too sure of their lines, and my name wasn't on the programme.

At the end of the show I tossed up between righteous indignation and fawning diplomacy—a dilemma all dramatists have to face sooner or later. Eventually I went round the back and told the company it had all been absolutely wonderful and I didn't know how to thank them. This confused them at first, because they obviously thought I was the man about the smell in the prop-room; but after I'd introduced myself they assured me I was the biggest thing since Molière, and rushed off to their dressing rooms to have hysterics. The producer didn't seem to be about, although I noticed that a scruffy little door marked "Director of Productions," in a dank underground passage



"Ye Cup Final score?"

-Brockbank



full of three-legged sofas, was firmly locked and had a light showing under it. So I went back to my hotel and couldn't even get a cheese sandwich.

Now, the notable point about that experience is this: the play made seven hundred pounds gross on the week (less entertainments tax), of which I was graciously permitted to keep six per cent; and it earned money steadily in rep for several years, in its revised, unrecognizable version. Nobody seems to have heard of it, but as far as I'm concerned it was a success.

Unfortunately, with the arrogance of the beginner, I decided that my next effort was not going to be messed about by *anybody*. I called it something like *Mortar*, and I stubbornly resisted all attempts to alter it to *Bouquet for Julie*. The *première* was to be somewhere grand, like Brighton, to start a pre-London tour, and I exercised my right to attend rehearsals so zealously that two different leading ladies, each of

international renown, had resigned with nervous breakdowns before anyone had even stopped reading from the script. The third leading lady, after hearing me tell her nineteen times how to get all the hidden beauty out of a line which ultimately had to be cut because it held up the action, threw a carrier-bag of Jerusalem artichokes at me. After that she would lie flat on her back and drum her heels on the stage whenever I rose in the stalls with my notebook, but she didn't deter me. I haunted them day and night. Each morning I brought a new sheaf of revisions, interpolations and amendments. I kept clambering on to the stage with my umbrella to demonstrate pieces of business which would have been quite obscure enough to them even without my help. I hinted that the leading man was taking drugs. I demanded to be shown the scenery before the designer had had time to sharpen his pencil. One rehearsal was

held up for an hour and a half while they tried to persuade me to alter a scene in which a character arrived at a Kensington flat five minutes after leaving Dumfries on a bicycle. I kept offering to go home with an elderly character woman and hear her lines. I would suddenly pop up at the back of the upper circle and cry out triumphantly "Can't hear a *thing* from here!" Utter demoralization set in on the day before the opening, when I told the producer that six out of the eight parts had been played better by my Tennis Club Dramatic Society.

Next day we opened, and no greater mistake was ever made in the history of the drama.

We never reached London, of course. And even if we had it wouldn't have been necessary to lock *me* out of the theatre: I'd have been on the high seas. It may take me a long time to learn, but I finally know when I'm beaten.

Airstrip Number Two

By MARSHALL PUGH

TOO much was made of our little differences with the English over the Uist Rocket range. Naturally, we screamed murder to raise the price of compensation. This was widely misconstrued. If you were to believe what you read in the papers we were all Orwellian prophets keening against Airstrip Number Two, unpatriotically trying to drive cash customers away.

Whippet-keen reporters were at the back of much of it, I'm sure. One lot, hotfoot from an attempt to unmask an Egyptian spy ring in Glasgow, were up to their notebooks in the moral danger scare.

By their way of it, teddy boys were abroad in Benbecula and rock 'n' roll had swept through Balivanich. It was thanks to them that the one erk on the island with a drape suit was posted and that they disbanded the R.A.F. Billet Skiffle Group (drums, mouth-organ, chair).

The wild night-life of the island was watched, particularly in Lochboisdale. There, on the three weekly nights when a boat from the mainland calls, problem

children linger in a café until midnight over sandwiches of bully-beef and late night lemonade. Then, pressure was exerted on the cinema manager to stop playing Elvis Presley in the interval at the crofters' film shows.

Interviewing all but the sheep, the Press brought many misunderstandings. But the South Uist Nationalists who came all the way from their Edinburgh firesides were fire-raisers too.

They called for a defence of South Uist, home of the Second Sight, cradle of the Gaelic language, the uncut diamond of the Outer Islands. According to them the English would exorcise our spirit, beat out our bilinguality and ruin our skyline.

Was it any wonder then that the wilder Mod men among us became the victims of their own publicity? Was it their fault that we suffered from the fiercest outbreak of feyness since the Loch Maddy Thespians put on *Mary Rose*?

All of a sudden the air was crackling with psychic phenomena. It was worse than a spiritualist church at Hallowe'en.

From the Hill of Fairies, close by the jet-planes, weird music began to drift at night, down to the keener ears. Fairy dogs were once more with us and mystic lights along the machair when something grim was going on. Of their own volition, coffin screwnails turned again in the workshop of the undertaker Sunndachan (Happy Face) Macaffer. This was to warn him of prospective business.

The defence of the language was arranged in a slightly subtler way. On the forms they were asked to fill in, to take on rocket range work, our men were asked if they had ever been Communist Party members.

In the good old days, some of the screened insisted, the only witch-hunting activity had been bracketed with broomsticks and the strange spells cast on cows. The bolder filled up their forms in Gaelic and one hilarious Highlander on the cement-mixer made out his form in the name of his pet sheep.

"Change it, Charlie," said the foreman, who is also secretary of our United Nations Association. "Gaelic scholars are rife in London," he went on. "Do you want to lose your job? Would you have your wife driven back to the

winkle-picking for the rest of her natural days?"

The foreman's civilizing influence was felt, but one impressionable workman was sent to Coventry—not only for filling in his form in English; he had also acquired the southern habit of describing a period of rest as "bashing your bunk" or "Egyptian P.T."

The matter of our distorted skyline was more involved. Some of the purists argued that they could not complain against the moving of eight Swedish pre-fabs from the edge of the aerodrome. They said that they failed to see the peaty beauty of this belt and reminded all that the cynical inmates called it "North Korea."

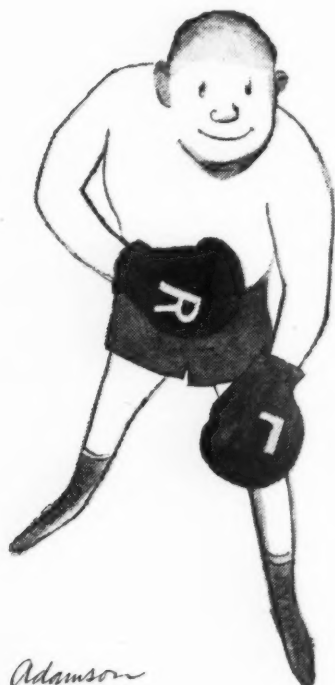
But they voted solidly against the radar station to be built on the Hill of Miracles, beyond Eochar and the rocket platform. This, as the more poetic expressed it, was a gibe at the old beliefs, worse than the threat to hand the island over to the American Strategic Air Force; more terrifying than the fear of atomic outfall on the trout.

The louder locals took the matter up, but honour was satisfied when the Air Force promised to mount searchlights on the radar station to floodlight the Hill on feast days.

Meantime, wearing fur hats which resembled tea-cosies, erks were landing on Eriskay like Prince Charlie. Some were off to share the deserted island of St. Kilda with the sea-birds and the sheep. For once wild-lifers in Edinburgh and London combined to protest against the danger to which the rare St. Kilda field-mice were exposed.

The trouble could have gone on for ever, like one of the meatier Gaelic fairy stories, had not the Land Court sat and tried to mediate between us and the English. Their proposals would not only have united Englishman and Highlander but Greek and Turk.

Their suggestion was that we should have a Gaelic-speaking guided missile unit, coming to us with false smiles and a Highland uniform. A little rocket range is one thing but a Gaelic-speaking army is another matter altogether. The simple-minded, open-handed local English will suit us well enough. We had a bellyful of Gaelic-speaking servicemen at the Massacre of Glencoe.

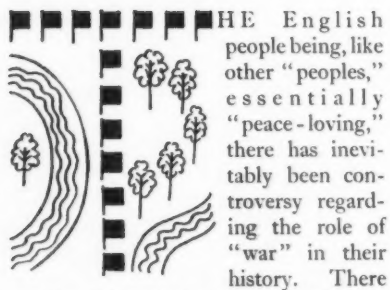




"You rang, m'lady?"

Cockburn's Aspects of English History

Disputes with Others



THE English people being, like other "peoples," essentially "peace-loving," there has inevitably been controversy regarding the role of "war" in their history. There can be little doubt that at one time civilian historians, fascinated by diagrams, with squares and small flags, showing what went wrong at the battles of Cannæ, Fontenoy, etc., and their judgment warped by an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Clausewitz, paid far too much attention to this kind of thing.

After all, as has been well said, making due allowance for certain differences in the type of weapons in use at different periods, and recognizing that the question Who won? is always of some interest, one battle is very much like another. With similar qualifications the same may be said of conflicts at sea.

Later, as Economics (see Chapter IV) became more widespread, it began to be felt that Clausewitz was both cynical and German, as was shown in the remark he made about politics, and many took the view that time and space could be saved by omitting battles, and even war *as such*, from history books altogether.

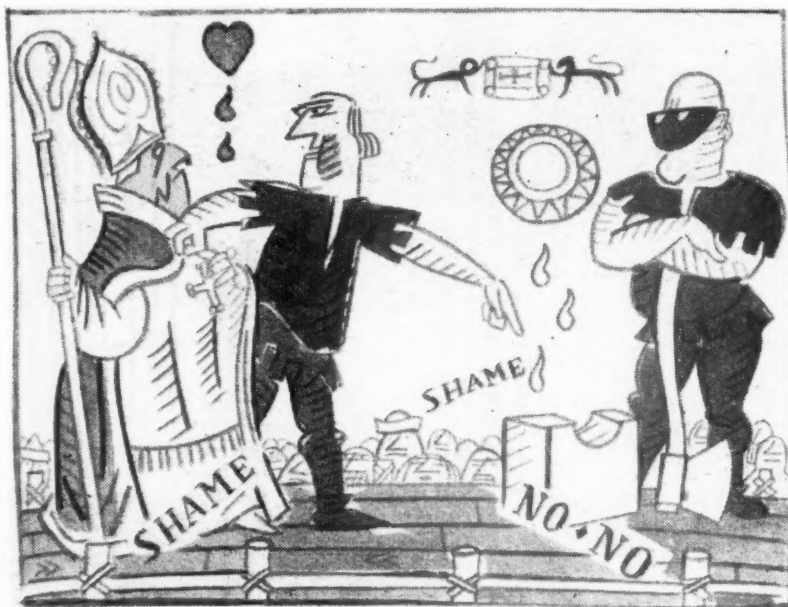
This, like so many moves in the right direction—one may instance Darwin, the temperance movement in the United States, and the Russian revolution—went too far.

Though battles in themselves are rightly held to be both uneconomic and anti-social, wars can and sometimes do produce effects in the economic field which may justifiably be described as "important," due account being of course taken of the fact that whatever happened would have happened any way in the long run, as a result of progress.

As Henry VI wrote in a private letter to Joan of Arc shortly before she paid the inevitable penalty for her rash, though doubtless sincere, course of action: "Much as we may all deplore

some of the episodes of the last fifty years (and I would be the last to deny that there have been moments when all thoughtful men and women must have been gravely troubled) yet if these events have done something to bring about a

clear. There were many thinking men in the country who felt that if only Pym, Hampden, Cromwell and the like had "held their horses" and had realized that the sheer weight of enlightened public opinion was going to be brought



better understanding of the character and aims of our two peoples, then the sacrifices we have all made will not have been in vain."

It was said, privately, that Joan (as she was familiarly known) was much touched by this evidence of English goodwill.

Both Jack Cade, who, when all is said and done, did behead the acting head of the Treasury in 1450, and—stepping back a pace to earlier social conditions—Wat Tyler, who beheaded the Archbishop of Canterbury, held this optimistic view. Tyler, after being first tricked, then slain, said as he lay dying that he "felt the class relationship had at least been clarified."

He had of course failed to realize that English public opinion rarely sanctions the public execution of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The position of the so-called Parliamentarians in the attitude they adopted towards Charles I is less immediately

to bear by constitutional means, they would have desisted from the actions which—as at Naseby—they subsequently took.

Had they so desisted it seems unlikely





that Charles II would have had any case at all.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that Cromwell, by teaching cavalry to fight in leather jerkins, did almost as much for the English horse as James I had done. The War Office was against it, and even in 1664 "Black Tom" General Lord Fairfax described what we should now call good horses as "over-valued pygmy baubles." He also did much to spread the notion that racing men were "cissies." It was not until the stern gang-fights of 1936 on Brighton racecourse that this imputation was finally refuted.

The truth probably is that whereas the English were not always able to arrange for foreign wars to take the proper course, it was always in the power of Englishmen to avoid civil wars by—as later happened—bringing in democracy.

The conflict with Spain in the days of Frobisher and many others of his kidney laid the foundations of the English Mercantile Marine. (A man who stated at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh that he had been deluded into supposing that a mercantile marine was an officer of the Royal Marines operating on the Black Market was expelled from the Spanish Main and had his licence endorsed.)

What happened in between is too confused and controversial to be dealt with here. England "gained" Canada. And the spice trade flourished.

And then England found itself face to face with Napoleon. Had Napoleon known, as the English did, that the lust for power and naked aggression simply does not pay, Napoleon—who ended his life in relative indigence and obscurity on the island of St. Helena—might, in the fullness of time, have done the same thing on his native island of Corsica without ever bothering to move himself from the Bonaparte family homestead.

All through the succeeding century the English were learning more and more about the nature and purpose of war. It has been said that the wars of the two hundred years preceding the period of about fifty years ago consolidated capitalism and led to imperialism, with the result that both Karl Marx and V. I. Lenin applied for tickets to the reading-room of the British Museum with the idea of finding out what was going on.

The charge has been made that had a different course been adopted, both of these—even allowing for the excitable Jewish temperament of the one and the Slavonic one of the other—would have been prepared to join the Labour Party, to the advantage of all concerned.

The view is superficial. The Labour Party was already on the way.

There are those who claim that the Boer War caused the Labour Party. This is an exaggeration. What the Boer War caused was, in the first place, a certain amount of pacifism. As a distant relative of the Duke of B——shire wittily remarked at the time "D——n it, a fellow doesn't want to be mixed up in a Jamieson Raid every day of the b——y week."

The Boer War also gave rise to the phrase "pro-Boer." Hitherto, Englishmen had tended to be "pro" this and "anti" that without much thought of the consequences. "We leave all that sort of thing to the Frenchies," as a relative of the Duke of C——shire wittily remarked when somebody asked him whether he would sit for a pro-tem prototype of an Anti.

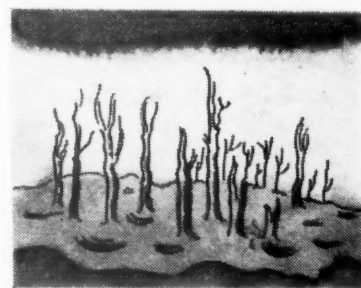
When, however, Englishmen and women of every class and condition saw the late Lloyd George leaving Birmingham Town Hall disguised as a policeman for fear of a mob which was seeking to lynch him as a pro-Boer, wiser counsels prevailed.



Thus by 1906 the Labour Party had thirty members in the House of Commons. But it was after the war of 1914–18 (which ended a halcyon period of English life in which except for the railway strike, the coal strike, and the general expectation of imminent disaster, there was

not a cloud in the sky) that the Labour Party and all that we mean by up-to-date Conservatism came into their own.

It is for this reason that it was known as the First Great War.



Harbour Rocks Town, Rolls Ratepayers for £100G

STORM-LASHED ratepayers of Whitstable, famed oyster port recently battered by the century's worst gales, now face a new, different threat; hurricane centre this time is the until-now calm water of Whitstable's small, L-shaped harbour.

First rumblings of the approaching storm could be heard four years ago, when profit-conscious heads of the British Transport Commission ruled the closing of England's next-oldest rail route from Whitstable Harbour to six-miles-away Canterbury. Now left was B.T.C. with a harbour which worries over railroad losses had previously prevented it from realizing it possessed. The haven, an artificial one built in the 1850s, had for years been used by few but occasional small merchantmen from Dutch ports and by local fishermen. Hardest fact which hopeful investigating officials had to face was that for three hours out of twelve the harbour contained no water.

Triggered by big economies from the now bulldozed railroad, B.T.C. thoughts turned to similar cash-saving action with their surplus harbour. Logistical checks on this scheme, however, showed that to remove the harbour would cost

By PHILIP HOLLAND

more than to maintain it. Months passed while the harbour continued to moulder, and now local fishermen, led by burly, bearded Alf Leggatt, M.B.E., claimed their livelihood threatened by decaying quays, silted channels. B.T.C., urged the radar-equipped toilers of the deep, was responsible for maintaining the harbour in good repair. Not so, riposted B.T.C. lawyers, for ships enter harbour at their own risk, pay dues for such facilities as they find.

Now came the rumour—some said an inspired leak—that Urban District Councillors led by Wallace C. Harvey, town's leading mortician and Chairman of the Council, were urging the harbour be bought by the Council on behalf of the ratepayers. But rising B.T.C. hopes were checked when anti-harbour councillors refused to go along with the Harvey group; agreed only that the possibility of harbour purchase be "explored."

B.T.C. officials, their fingers aching after months of being crossed, now offered the harbour for, they said, the knockdown price of £12,500. This was, to Chairman Harvey and his supporters, a bargain which ratepayers should grab.

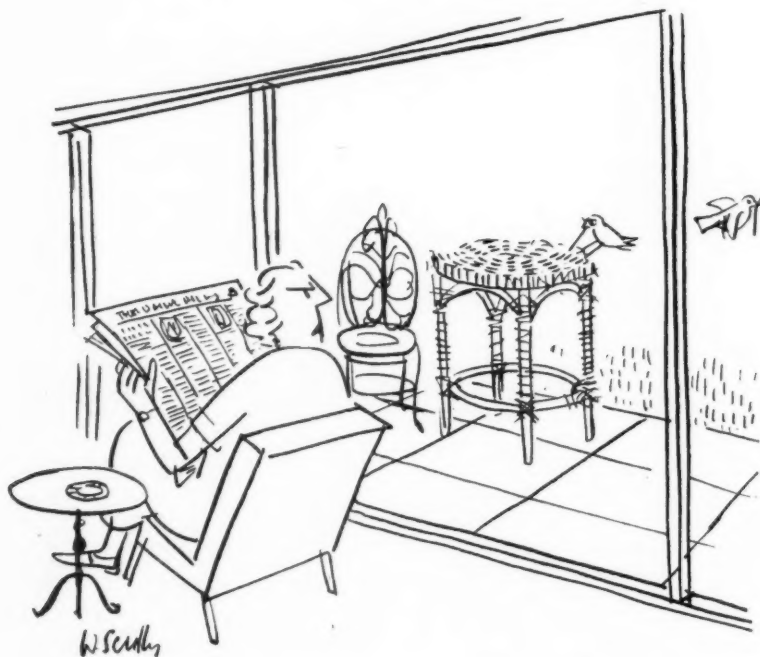
Asked anti-harbourites, now led by Councillor Reggie Mason, ace World War I fighter pilot and owner of a thriving garage, "What bids do we have to meet anyway? The queue for harbour ownership begins and ends with us." Harvey men countered with the report of experts that the repair figure, named by the Mason group as £100,000, would be a mere £71,200, that this would be ample to check decay, modernize facilities. Confidence of Chairman Harvey was vindicated when the Council passed a resolution agreeing the harbour be bought for £12,500, and let the chips fall where they might. But B.T.C.'s eager acceptance was checked when Councillor Mason demanded a referendum be held before purchase was finalized.

Harvey supporters, with protests at the expense of a referendum which, said their opponents, became them ill, agreed a referendum could be held about such a question, but only, they pointed out, if a demand for it backed by one hundred ratepayers was presented within seven days. Promised Councillor Mason "You shall have it," and collected one hundred and sixty signatures within the required period.

Soon public address trucks shattered the quiet rows of seaside homes with pleas for a heaviest-ever poll. Hustings zenithed as B.B.C. newsmen reported families split, homes upheaved, friendships broken as meetings, posters, car stickers sparked new groupings of pro- and anti-harbour factions. Eve of poll rumours that B.T.C. was ready with new ideas for surplus harbour exploitation if Whitstable citizens negated ownership found few takers amongst sceptical voters.

But if voters were stampeded into pro-harbour decisions, poll results showed indifferent work by husters. With an electoral roll of 13,000, 1,577 voted they were happy without a harbour, 2,423 opted for harbour ownership, 9,000 stayed home.

Hiding its relief as best it could, B.T.C. announced the result a blow for democracy which would be heard around the world, and mentioned 1,423 miles of surplus railroad in Ayrshire and the West Riding which, it said, were just what Whitstable needed.





The Strange World of H. W. and F. G. Fowler

By TOM GIRTIN

FOR the amateur of literary research there is nothing more satisfying than a nice spot of internal evidence—the sort of evidence that can be made to prove that Mr. Gladstone had an establishment at St. John's Wood where he kept a secret collection of curious daguerreotypes.

Lexicographers—thanks, probably, to a pretty general feeling that in an occupation mainly devoted to defining such words as “*frutescent*” (“of the nature of a frutex”) there can be little scope for self-revelation—have so far largely managed to escape this sort of research. But in a democracy a free Press has a positive duty to its readers to present the truth, however unpleasant it or they may be, and although a few hide-bound reactionaries may deplore the ruthless stripping of the veils of prudery from the secret lives of the Fowler brothers the exposure must be made.

My suspicions were first aroused while I was losing to my wife at “Scrabble.” I was furtively thumbing through the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1924 edition) to see if *ITOO* happened to be a word when my eye caught the sentence:

“It is a dirty business this meat canning.”

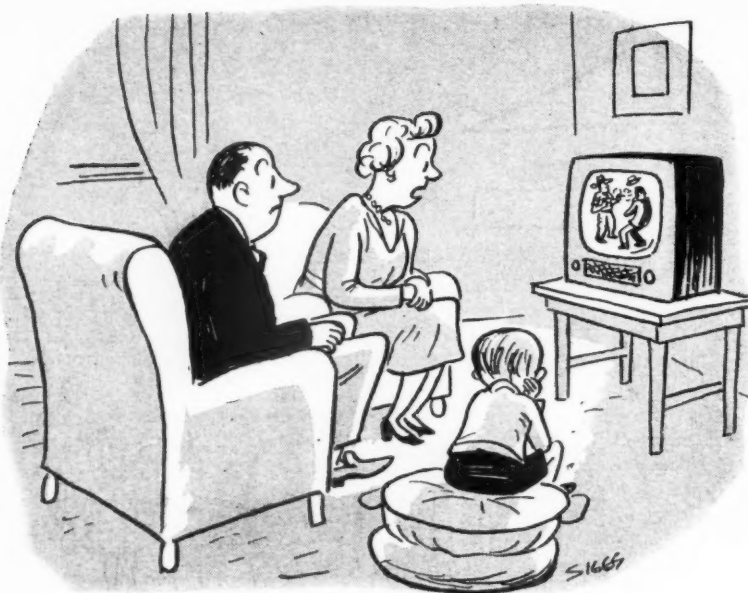
It was clear to me that the mind of any man to whom the word “*it*” suggests such an example of common usage called for immediate investigation. I knocked accidentally against the board, scattering the letters, declared the game a draw and in a rather tense atmosphere withdrew to the caries-riddled ivory tower of the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

From the internal evidence the dual nature of the authorship becomes at once apparent—obviously the man who under “*against*” writes “I am against

Reform” cannot, unless he is a politician, be the same man who twice, under “*be*” and “*for*,” declares “I am for tariff reform.”

And, equally clearly, the scholarly brother who under “*do*” says “He does the French books for the ‘Athenæum’,” who exemplifies “*somewhere*” by “Burton says somewhere in his ‘Anatomy’...” and who can make such an observation as “The biplane has my suffrage” must be a totally different character from the ferocious extrovert who faced with “*among*” immediately reacts “Kill him among you.”

This attitude H.W.—that is my guess—persistently maintains throughout 1064 pages: “Stir and you are a dead man” he barks. “Hit him full on the nose. Hit him on the head. Give him one in the eye. Now close the other eye. Hit him square on the jaw.” No wonder that by the time he reaches “*get*” he is



"I still feel they might have left us this hour to do as we like in."

complaining "Got my wrist dislocated" and has to take to the use of instruments: "Put a knife into, put a bullet through, put them to death, torture, ransom, expense . . ."

Some words, such as "for," demonstrate the uneasy mixture of both intellects—"a humane man for an executioner" shows the brothers in unusual harmony. Not so the moment of collaboration when F.G.'s mild boast "I gave £50 to the S.P.C.A." is followed immediately by H.W.'s brutal "Give him a kick."

Sometimes when F.G. has completed a word H.W. leans across the desk and adds a macabre Charles Addams touch of his own.

"Arm is out," says F.G., demonstrating the preposition. "(dislocated)" gloats H.W. in case anyone should think it merely extended. And F.G.'s "the time of the Black Death" is answered by a throaty chuckle "the good old times!"

Such examples make it a matter of comparative ease for the practised researcher to reconstruct a typical incident in the brothers' office at the Clarendon Press.

Scene: A brown study, tastefully decorated with ogee mouldings. Over the mantelpiece there hangs in an Oxford frame an enlarged sepia photograph of

Professor Skeat. On a gipsy table there is a well-thumbed copy of "The Pleasures of the Torture Chamber."

F.G.: I still think that it is going too far to exemplify "out" by "From out of the dungeon came a groan."

H.W. (coldly): May I remind you that we are now revising words beginning with "S"? Let me see now, where were we? Ah yes, indeed: "Score."

F.G. (eagerly): What about "Victor Trumper scored a . . ."

H.W. (firmly): "The scores of the whip showed on his back."

(F.G. winces and turns away as his brother writes feverishly.)

H.W. (half to himself): "I shall set the top of the wall with broken glass . . . stretch a wire across the road . . . sever his head from his body . . . slit his nose, throat, etc., slit one's weasand . . ."

(F.G. tries ineffectually to intervene.)

H.W. (continuing with gusto): "Heads were stuck on spikes of gateway . . . Blood spouts from the wound . . ."

(He looks up sharply)

You haven't contributed very much to this section.

F.G.: I was trying to point out that you have left out my "sign."

H.W.: Well?

F.G. (now hardly daring to produce it): "Violence is a sign of weakness."

H.W. (with a terrible calm): "Will pull out a knife and stick you."

F.G. (backing away nervously): Some fool has locked the door—by the way, couldn't we use that for "some"?

H.W.: Oh all right, I suppose so. But what about "stand"—that's one of yours too.

F.G. (humbly): I'm afraid the best I can do is "His wife stands him in £50 yearly for motor tires."

(H.W. looks at his brother rather strangely.)

H.W. (trying to recapture the mood): "Floor is swimming in blood" . . . "Think of a word beginning with B" . . . "Turn the body with the face upwards" . . .

So the delicate work of literary collaboration proceeds. There are still a number of points which defy the ingenuity of the researcher. How, for example—short of violence which we know was abhorrent to him—did F.G. ever succeed in establishing ("over my dead body!" I hear H.W. snarl) his entry under "young": "those whose innocence must be shielded from the indecent in talk and literature"?

Ocurring as it does only a few pages from the end this remark sabotages the whole of H.W.'s efforts: quite obviously this dictionary is itself a work against whose violent influence the kiddies must be protected. Has it occurred, I wonder, to any of those who have recently written to the Press boasting that their children are so sensitive that they wake screaming in the night after TV Children's Hour, that all the time the little swots may have been curled up with the Concise Oxford Dictionary?

The brothers, incidentally, in one of their rare, early moments of harmony, wrote their own epitaph.

"Both brothers are dead," they say with a calm acceptance of mortality, "They are both dead. They were gentlemen both."

And from the internal evidence, crazy mixed-up gentlemen at that.

§ §

Word for Word

"In a report from the education officer, Mr. J. Orton, the committee was told that the increase was in keeping with other independent girls' schools and was being made in order to meet the increased costs, incurred by the introduction of equal yaps for women teachers."

The Birmingham Post and Gazette

In Search of Huz and Buz

By JAMES INSIGHT

A DWARF living eight stories up takes the lift down to work each morning. Returning in the evening he gets out at the fifth floor, then walks the remaining three. Why?"

The colonel, the doctor's wife, the Enrolling Member of the Mothers Union and myself represent the brains. From our position round a small table on the platform we look at one another, then stare bleakly down the hall.

"It's an eleven-plus question," says the Chairman helpfully. He folds the question paper. "Children do it," he adds. But we leave it unanswered, passing on to the next.

"Does the Brains Trust not feel that the Bible is too difficult for the man in the street; and where for example in it can we read about Huz and Buz?" Deathly silence. The audience have us on the ropes.

"Vicar," says the Chairman at last, "would you like to open? I think this belongs to your sphere." The others look in my direction brightly, expectantly.

My brain becomes ice-cold. Wonderful how when really up against it help arrives. The martyrs possibly experienced the same sort of thing in a different way. I glance down the hall, uncross my legs. The first part is easy, but the second—ah, that's the catch. It is, it must be, a trick question. What do these ignorant villagers know about the Bible since they are too lazy to turn to it from one year to another? But one of them, realizing the strangeness of its by-ways, has sprung this trap for any who claim the Book to be within the understanding of the average man. Oh, fiendish cunning. I will begin by attacking the first part.

"Mr. Chairman," I say clearly, "the Bible is not too difficult for the man in the street. It is just that he much prefers other literature, something with pictures in it, comics perhaps. His bible is the open countryside, the crowded beach, the jealous idol squatting in the living-room. Unless he lives by the senses he sees no sense in living."

Amusement is running round the hall. We are punching back. Now for the second part of the question, that bit about Huz and Buz. One must be careful here; no good being vindictive.

The unknown questioner may have become muddled with, say, Gog and Magog; or perhaps he is trying to recall that bit about letting thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one.

We all have our Huzes and our Buzes, small quotations stored in the mind, never forgotten, like the curio cabinet in mother's drawing-room: the bottle of Jordan water, shell from the Dead Sea, earthenware lamp similar to that used by one of the disappointed virgins, a scorpion stinging itself to death on a cushion of cotton wool, three brass camels each smaller than the other, the kind of sling that laid out Goliath but which, whirled violently about the head in the back garden, only drops the stone harmlessly at one's feet.

If these spurious Huzes and Buzes so wished, one would be happy to mix it with them, producing wares collected from schoolboy days—"At Parbar westward, four at the causeway and two at Parbar" (I. Chron. xxvi, 18); the pet of Lazarus—"Moreover the dog"; Biblical tennis with Joseph serving in the courts of Pharaoh; or just plain rough and tumble with the father of the prodigal hurting himself—"he ran and fell on his neck."

Huz and Buz, I tell the audience, are mythical gentlemen. Having been in holy orders for nearly twenty years and having read the Bible through some five times I have yet to have the pleasure of

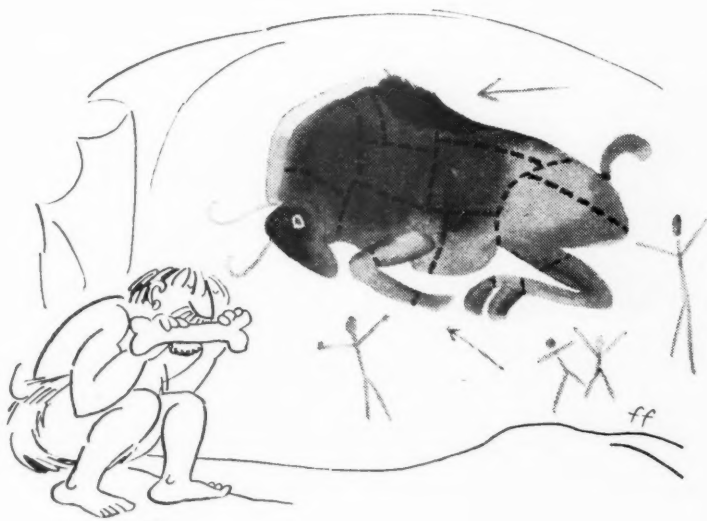
making their acquaintance. How could I forget such illustrious names? (Laughter.)

All are now quite satisfied. The Chairman turns to the others, raising his eyebrows, but none of the Brains Trust wishes to comment further. They are content to leave it to me as the expert. The colonel leans across the table. "Well done, Padre, I fancy we got a bit of our own back there. We owed them one for the dwarf. What!"

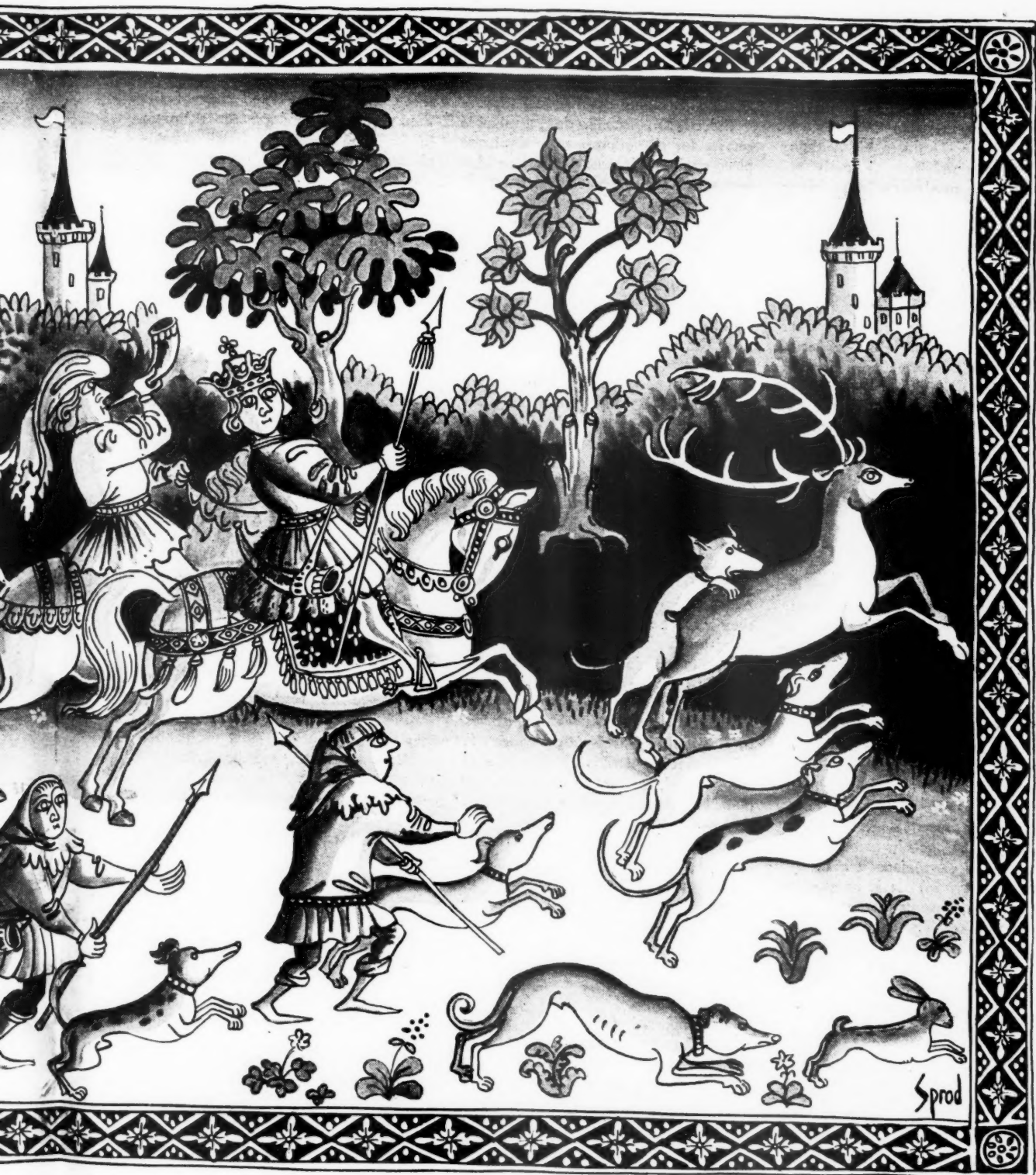
The hall is now practically empty. An unobtrusive woman in a felt hat approaches me, agreeing that people are not really reading the Bible these days. She puts one apologetically into my hand. Suddenly I know what is coming. I want to push it back at her, conscious of self-confidence subsiding with a long hiss, like that of a pricked balloon. She has the passage marked, pointing to it with her finger. My myth is flesh and blood. They are the sons of Nahor—"Huz his first-born, and Buz his brother" (Genesis xxii, 21). Thanking her, I go to find the Chairman.

"That perishing dwarf," I exclaim irritably, "he just liked the exercise I suppose—an open country type. Was that it?"

"Not at all, not at all," he says. "Can't you see it yet? He couldn't reach higher than the fifth button, that was why he had to walk. It wasn't his fault."







No Hawkers, Circulars, Pilgrims

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

I DON'T suppose I am alone in having had a letter from Mrs. Bertha Roe. I am delighted to give it wider publicity. It points out that Press references to the voyage of the *Mayflower II* and to Sir Anthony Eden's operation "have recently accentuated the need for distinguishing between the two Bostons. In some cases even the context has failed to make clear whether it is intended to refer to Boston, England, or to its daughter-city in America."

This is a mistake I mean to avoid, and a good start would be to make it clear that my correspondent is the Mayor of Boston, Lincs., writing under her ref. 18/4/2/22 from the Mayor's Parlour in that town—"a Borough," as she explains, "for over 400 years with a present population of some 25,000, a flourishing seaport, a county town and the marketing and business centre for some of the richest agricultural land in England." She has no connection whatever with that other place in Massachusetts.

It is naturally very annoying for Boston, Lincs., considering its many amenities enumerated above, to be confused in the public mind with an upstart namesake whose custom house tower is a mere 500 feet high, whose university has a mere twenty thousand students and whose people have nothing in common with the people of Boston, Lincs., except for their periodic raising of vulgarly fat sums to keep its church of St. Botolph in decent repair. (Some ignorant Massachusetts Bostonians think that the "Stump" gets its name because Massachusetts Bostonians are always stumping up for it.) It is no wonder that Mrs. Roe wants some sort of separation order. The carelessness she complains of in the papers has probably got her own residents in such a state

that they absently book air passages for the wrong Boston instead of boarding their own familiar buses home from Spilsby, Spalding or Woodhall Spa.

Indeed, Mrs. Roe has done a valuable service for all sufferers from duplicate place-names. It was high time that someone spoke up about the nuisance of such confusions. There may have seemed a pleasing sentimentality about the Pilgrim Fathers' decision to dub their New World landfall Plymouth because Plymouth was where they'd started from (though the idea doesn't stand up to reasoned examination), but then the tempo of life was slower in those days: even by the close of the seventeenth century the number of people mistaking Plymouth, Mass., for Plymouth Hoe were so few as to be negligible. But the whim got out of hand, as whims will. And now things are different. Travellers book their passages in haste; harassed secretaries fail to double-check documents; the result is that we are constantly reading of businessmen, United Nations observers and the like who disembark at Athens, Tennessee, when they thought they were bound for the Greek one. Hard-up visitors to the Holy Land are confronted, at journey's end, with the unsought battlements of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation; giddy young undergraduates get themselves hitch-hiked to the entirely wrong Cambridge . . . which, as it happens, is a Boston (Mass.) suburb, and, for further confusion, the home of Harvard. It will be remembered that the recent Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was seriously delayed while delegates disentangled themselves from misroutings to London, Ontario. And Court circles are still blushing over last month's French visit, when Her Majesty and Prince Philip almost touched down at Paris, Illinois, before the mistake was discovered.

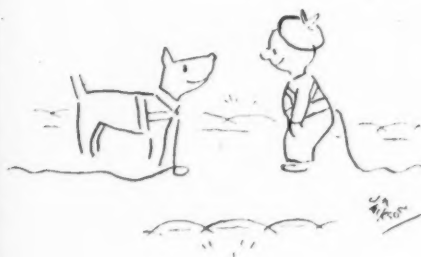
The whole thing is a mess.

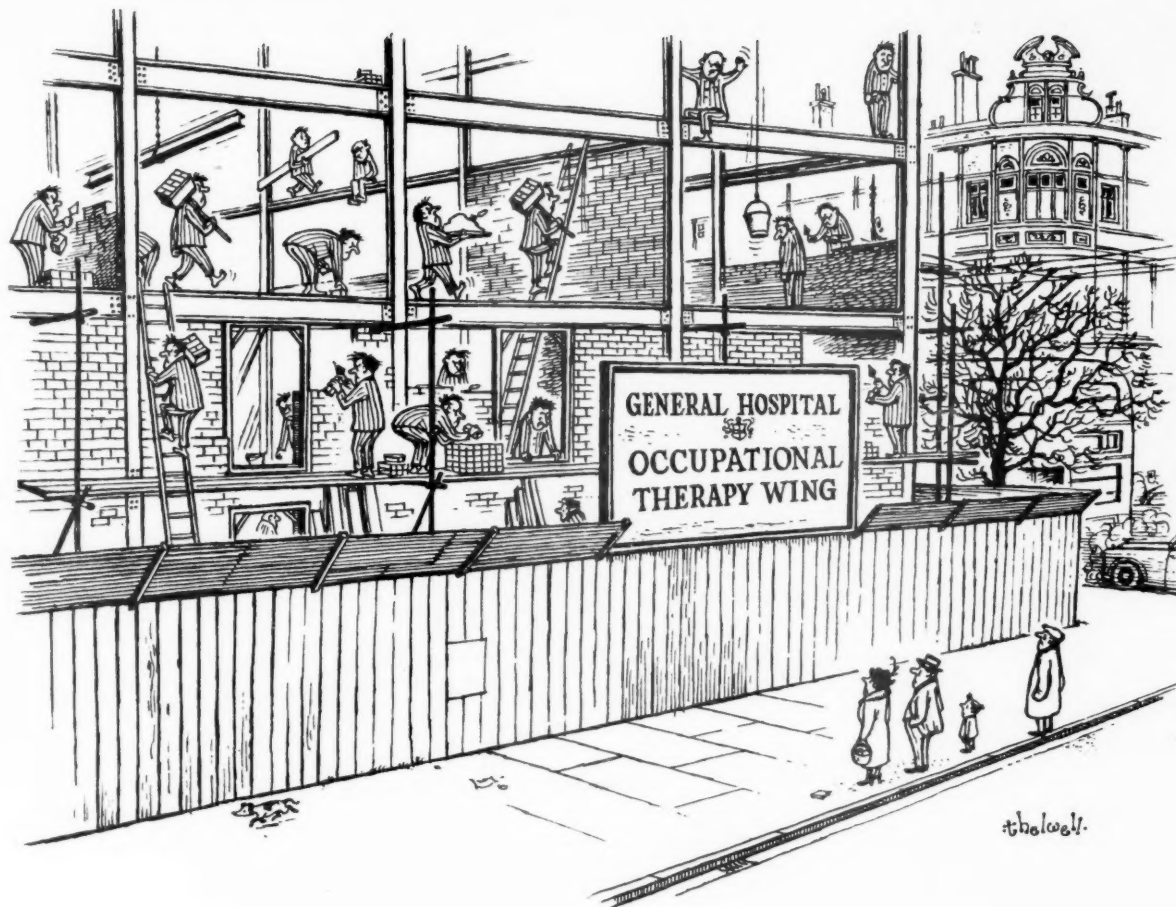
Mrs. Roe does not give me details of embarrassments caused, and this is a pity; an error pointed out is an error avoided in future. But I am very much on her side, and can see exactly the kind of trouble she has. Tourists call at the Parlour asking for the birthplace of Emerson, and have to be told that

they are three thousand miles off course, and offered the birthplace of the martyrologist, Foxe, as the next best thing, with a conducted tour of the local vegetable-canning factories thrown in for good measure. Shrill school-children demand the scene of the historic tea-party. Small outings from the Women's Institutes hammer on the door of Mrs. Roe's private residence at awkward hours, anxious to be directed to the site of the first puritan colony in Massachusetts Bay, and are only moderately appeased when told that a four-mile trip eastwards to the shores of the Wash will enable them, on a clear day, to see roughly the spot where King John lost his luggage. But no doubt it was more imminent and disturbing dangers which drove the Mayor of Boston (Lincs.) to write to the Press. The last thing wanted in Boston, Lincs., is for the place to be invaded by newspapermen clamouring for the latest bulletins on Sir Anthony and upsetting the market stalls (Wed. and Sat.), or for Commander Alan Villiers and his merry lads to become a charge on the municipal exchequer by getting *Mayflower II* stuck in the silt of the river Witham.

Incidents of this kind are not only immensely exasperating for the Mayor; they make for restlessness and dissatisfaction among the townsfolk. It may be—who knows?—that the people of Boston, Lincs., are beginning to wave their rating assessments in the streets, demanding to know why Boston, Mass., can run to coastal passenger traffic, airlines, overhead railways and a world-renowned symphony orchestra while Boston, Lincs., has to write letters explaining that it isn't Boston, Mass. In no time at all, many of the "some 25,000" could be driven to emigrate, seeking an address that can stand on its own feet, like Ormskirk, or Putney, or Dnieprodzerzhinsk. No one could fail to sympathize, and I only hope that I have done my bit to clear up the maddening misunderstanding.

Anyone wanting further assistance in distinguishing between the daughter- and mother-city should telephone the Parlour. But ask the operator for Boston, Lincs., if you don't want to waste both time and money.





Regina Orme's Guardian

By STELLA GIBBONS

GUARDIANS in fiction may be divided, when we have a spare moment, into the Shambling and the Severe, and while in Jean Webster's story *Daddy-Long-Legs* we have an example of the Shambling Guardian (all arms, legs and wistful charm, making us long to hit him), in another American novel, *Infelice* by Augusta Evans Wilson, we have Earle Palma, a regular humdinger of the Severe sort.

To turn aside unwillingly from him for a moment: in older novels, the Luvly Gurl who has been made ward of a Severe Guardian usually wants to ride some tiresomely unmanageable horse and the Guardian "gravely" forbids her to. But with a stamp of her chestnut curls and a catching of her

rosy lip between her teeth she is off and away and the mischief is done. "Bitterly was saucy little Cissy to regret that defiance later," and before things get better she has "sunk" her vicious little teeth into some get-at-able part of the Guardian, usually his wrist, and he goes about with it in a sling for simply weeks and weeks, causing her agonies of secret tears every time she runs into him while she is culling fragrant blossoms in the great sweet rose garden.

She ends by kissing with her soft red lips the fading scar of which her imperious temper has been the cause, and then he catches her soft kittenish little form to his heart—by George—yes, where were we—well, in the contemporary version of this the Severe Guardian gravely forbids the Luvly

Gurl to visit some low night-club to which he, as a Man, may safely go; nay, may even have already visited; and she rebels. Off he goes in a huff (at least, in any other man but a Severe Guardian it would be a huff, but they only get grieved or pained or oddly constrained in their manner) leaving her (Unfair to Janis!) kneeling on the hearthrug and seeing the flames through a strange crystal blur.

Mrs. Wilson was born in 1839 and died in 1909, and she is described in my reference book as "an Alabama author," but when she wrote *Infelice* I can't find out, and anyway, while reading it dates are the last thing one thinks about.

"In the gladiatorial arena of the court room, Mr. Palma was regarded as a large-brained, nimble-witted, marble-hearted man, of vast ambition and

tireless energy in the acquisition of his aims; but his colleagues and clients would as soon have sought chivalric tenderness in a bronze statue or a polished obelisk of porphyry."

That tells us all we need to know about Palma, I think; but Madame Odille Orphia Orme has seen fit to entrust her daughter Regina, aged fifteen, to his care, and who are we to question the decisions of a mother in a novel by Mrs. Wilson?

But for all his icy ways Palma believes in doing himself well. His library fairly intoxicates Regina when she first sees it. Amidst bronze inkstands, ebony and gold *escritoires*, brightly embroidered cushions for his feet to rest on, the final refinement is a velvet penwiper, while in a recess "hung a man's pearl-grey dressing gown lined with cherry silk; while under it rested a pair of black velvet slippers encrusted with vine

leaves and bunches of grapes in gold bullion."

Regina is asleep on the hearthrug in this bower when Palma comes in; and after a few playful yet oddly grisly remarks, which give us more than a hint of what his court-room manner must have been when he got hold of a shaky witness ("There is nothing very dreadful in your being caught asleep, like a white kitten on a velvet rug. If you are never guilty of anything worse, you and your guardian will not quarrel"), he chucks her under the chin.

Well, I know it says: "When he put one hand under her chin and raised it he saw that the missing light in the alabaster vase had been supplied, and her smooth cheeks were flushed to a brilliant carmine," but if it wasn't a chuck, what exactly was it?

Then, "throwing his massive head back, he adjusted his steel-rimmed

spectacles, joined his hands and built a pyramid with his fingers; while he scrutinized her as coldly, as searchingly as Swammerdam or Leeuwenhoek" (I do like *value* when I lay out ninepence on a book) "might have inspected some new and as yet unclassified animaliculum, or as Fillippi or Pasteur studied the causes of 'Pébrine'."

Putting aside a passing wonder as to who the dickens Swammerdam, Leeuwenhoek, Fillippi and "Pébrine" might have been, we read feverishly on, and presently Regina is rising eighteen, and Palma is in the bad books of his step-sister, Olga, because for the last eight years he has persisted in trying to prevent her marriage with Belmont Eggleston, the struggling young painter. He has done it, too, and finally his warnings are proved dead right (what else did you expect?) when Eggleston marries another girl for her money.

Poor Olga has brain fever, and, as is customary in Augusta Evans Wilson's novels, the illness proceeds in the greatest discomfort and confusion.

Palma, who has lately been concealing a burning passion for Regina beneath his build-up of marble lips, granite face, steel spectacles and all the rest of it, is away in Washington on a case when Olga becomes ill.

No sooner has the doctor turned Olga's mother out of the sickroom and substituted Regina ("she is watchful, and possesses unusual self-control which you, my dear madam, utterly lack in a sick-room") than back comes Palma.

"I am glad to find Mr. Palma has returned," blethers the good doctor, "though he knows no more than a judge's gavel of what is needful in a sick-room, *he will be a support and comfort to us all*" (italics mine, and Ye gods! can you wonder?) "and his nerves never flag, never waver."

The nerves of a Severe Guardian never do, and Palma's have the additional resource of an inexhaustible supply of cigars which he is always lighting at the gas brackets; but it bears hard on everybody else. What does he contribute in the way of comfort and support, exactly?

He glides between the gas globes (likes to be near them, naturally, because of the cigars) and the bed while uttering a groan from between his granite lips, sits for hours on end gazing at Olga with



"The roof garden was perhaps a mistake."

one elbow on his knee, and at intervals he sighs so loudly that the sick-room party can hear him. Oh, yes—on one occasion he does go and attend to the fire in the furnace room, but only after Regina has become so harassed by his breathing remarks about her faintness and weariness into her ear that she says *anything* in order to get rid of him. Then, “shod in his velvet slippers, he noiselessly left the room,” but there is something fishy about this, because the house is huge, and full of servants, and surely one of them could have sat up all night to perform this menial task?

Palma and Regina have the usual Row Over the Unconscious Form of the Sufferer which takes place in most of Mrs. Wilson's novels, and it ends in a draw. He is reduced to gliding in and out twice a day for a brief consultation with Doctor Suydam, and startling people out of their brief uneasy dozes.

However, after many weary, weary months of misunderstanding and suffering caused by honourable pride—I do wish I had the space to tell you about Madame Odille Orphia Orme's befoolment of General René Laurance in Paris, and how after a scene in which her scheme of vengeance is almost at fruition "his hat had rolled out of sight and . . . he searched hurriedly for it," her companion Mrs. Waul (One of the Catter Wauls, would she be? Sorry, the sense of period is infectious) "spoke from her distant recess," and what she said was: "General Laurance will find his hat between the ottoman and the window"—but to return to Palma and Regina.

On page 497 (good gracious, are we there already?) we are into the home stretch at last.

"She felt giddy, faint, and the world seemed dissolved in rosy mist . . . 'My Lily! my proud little flower. You will not come? Then Earle Palma must take his own and hold it, and wear it for ever . . . ' After his stern self-control and patient waiting, the proud man who had never loved anyone but the fair young girl in his arms abandoned himself to the ecstasy of possession. He kissed the eyebrows that were so lovely in his sight . . . 'my precious violet eyes, so tender and holy . . . my Silver Lily . . . mine for ever.'"

Sooner her than us, I am sure you will agree.



The Force that Through the Atom

THE force that through the atom scares the Powers
Drives armies from the land, and from the seas
The swift destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell how pointless those
Whose youth is bent by the fierce sergeant-major.

The force that drives the warhead from the rocket
Drives from the sky the screaming aeroplane
And stills its racket.

And I am dumb to count how many coins
Will thus be added to my patchwork pocket.

The hand that hovers on a foreign button
Stirs the quick Sandys to sink on fissile missiles
Sums very huge.

And I am dumb to tell the slanging nations
To stop the ruddy rot and be their age.

E. V. MILNER

Not Missing the Bus

By HENRY FAIRLIE



The President

I DECIDED recently, as a perhaps romantic gesture of faith in Mr. Harold Macmillan, Sir David Eccles and Mr. John Profumo, to join the Conservative Party. Having paid my subscription I quickly made up my mind to attend the Divisional Annual General Meeting. I took this decision for two reasons. First, I was anxious to catch a whiff of the grapeshot which is supposed to have been flying around in local Conservative Associations in recent months. Secondly, it seemed the only possible chance that I would have of taking part in the political activities of my Association during the coming year.

The membership card which I received on payment of my subscription included a PROGRAMME FOR 1957. This read as follows:

MARCH
Divisional Annual General Meeting
MAY
Draw
JUNE
Outing to "Chartwell," Home of
Sir Winston Churchill
JULY
Women's Garden Fête
OCTOBER
Divisional Dance
DECEMBER
Social

I elected for March.

I entered the Corn Exchange—at least there were the proportions of the room to admire if all else failed—just as the President of the Divisional Conservative and Unionist Association was calling the meeting to order. The President proved to be a peer, sixth generation, one of the few left in the South Country who thinks it sufficient to record in *Who's Who* that he was once Lord-in-Waiting to George V and now "owns 10,000 acres." He seemed, as he peered at his audience, to be looking across all those 10,000 acres at his flock of Southdown ewes, no doubt wondering to himself why they hadn't lambed by the end of March.

He smiled benevolently, but his voice carried a quality of unchallengeable briskness. After all, why shouldn't it? The best among his audience were his tenants, and the rest were, to all intents and purposes, nowhere. As though he had a bus to catch, he summoned the officers one by one to make their reports and, as soon as they had sat down, declared their reports seconded and carried. If he took the trouble to say *nemine contradicente* at all it was under his breath.

The Chairman, however, once she was on her feet, he could not restrain. She appeared more like a ship than a woman, built of elm, her prow carved like a majestic figurehead, dipping occasionally as she bestowed her benediction on some junior officer or some branch secretary. As one watched her it was impossible to imagine that the Conservative Party could ever be in the slightest danger.

Here was something indestructible.

Gaitskells, one mused, might come and go. But women like her would go on for ever. She almost did. Every sentence of it, however, was worth while, if only to observe the slight lift of her nostrils, catch the least declension of her voice, as she urged the branch secretaries to enrol those who, "even though unfit for the more complicated tasks, might be useful in addressing envelopes." One sighed at this assurance that even the Conservative Party could find a place for the universally enfranchised voter.

At last, in a manner which was scarcely less patronizing, she moved the re-election of the President—"our new boy," as she called him. Moved. Seconded. Carried. The President rose to the occasion. In less than a minute he smiled, refrained from saying that he was unworthy of the honour done to him, innocently remarked that although his chores as President were too easy for words he still could not have carried them out without the guidance of the



The Sitting Member



The Chairman

Chairman, and concluded with the assurance that if the Association should choose to dismiss him at any time he would be only too pleased.

Then in another couple of minutes he had another three items on the agenda safely put out of the way for yet another year. It was, after all, going to be all right. He would catch his bus and be back home within the hour.

He had not, however, reckoned with the last obstacle: the speech of the sitting Member. I had been looking at the local M.P. on and off during the evening, like a rabbit mesmerized by a weasel, because this was the man I had committed myself to support at the next General Election. I had watched him in the House of Commons many times before, always a little stumbling, always sadly conscious that when he rose the House emptied and the reporters put Mr. Ian Fleming's latest novel on top of their shorthand notebooks.

What a transformation there was this night! Brimful of confidence, unrecognizable surely to his fellow Members at

Westminster, he stepped forward to address his leading constituents. How casually he dropped the reference to a meeting he had once had with President Eisenhower, how quietly mentioned his friendship with Mr. Macmillan. His constituents looked up, their minds filled with the details of egg subsidies and price reviews, and one felt that at any moment one of them might suddenly jump up and ask if they couldn't have bread instead of cake.

The Member remained unperturbed. With undefeatable nonchalance he referred to "a worthwhile meeting I had with the local branch of the National Farmers Union." Could he have forgotten that this was the meeting at which one farmer had objected that since he showed no inclination to answer any questions straightforwardly there was no point in going on asking them? One was still wondering about this when it suddenly dawned that he had dismissed Suez in one sentence. The sentence? "I have no intention of going into the Suez affair to-night."

At last he warmed to his theme—"my keynote," as he more than once called it. This turned out to be an

expected plea for the reduction of taxes on the familiar grounds that those who earn a lot of money by their talents and their work should be allowed to keep it. This appeal, than which none could have been better suited to his audience, was suddenly robbed of most of its effect when in the next breath he declared that the economic condition of the country was too serious to allow anyone to feather his own nest.

For the first time the farmers and the auctioneers and the solicitors shifted in their seats. At last, I thought, I will get a whiff of that grapeshot. But instead, as the Member sat down, the President rose sharply to his feet. No, he didn't ask if there were any questions. He merely announced: "Mr. Granary will move the vote of thanks." Mr. Granary coupled the vote of thanks to the Member with a vote of thanks to the President. The President accepted this in the only way possible: by declaring it seconded and carried. In a moment he had, almost inaudibly, declared the meeting closed. Thirty seconds more and he was out of the door into the High Street.

At least he had caught his bus.

Whither Utopia:

OR, for those who prefer a longer, lucider title,
*Some thoughts on seeing a man
 Begging outside a violin recital
 With a placard saying "Tone Deaf."* The point is, Can

We be sure we are wise to use our charities up
 At the present amazing rate?
 When the last maimed orphan leaps with the last lost pup
 Through primrose acres owned and run by the State,

What will be left for the monstrous glossy campaign
 To bully, cajole and wheedle
 Us into supporting, giving against the grain?
 Will they pile a haystack of pathos round each needle

Of need as their objects grow smaller and smaller, until
 We have Twilight Homes for bores,
 Sickness benefits for the "socially ill"
 And free sound-proofing for incurable snores?

Or will they disintegrate quietly, one by one, as
 Mankind moves splendidly on?
 I'd gladly subscribe to a Home for Professional Runners
 Of Charities whose occupation is gone.

PETER DICKINSON

Rocks Around the Globe

By R. G. G. PRICE

WHATEVER you may think of Space you can't call it empty.

From meteorites to vast bits of Something that cannot be seen but behave like invisible transmitters the Heavens are packed with stuff of one kind and another. Lately, in addition to the normal programme, there has been a dullish comet and the newspapers have tried in an unbelieving way to work up interest in it. It may be Nature's contribution to the Geophysical Year, though a sharp temporary increase in the strength of gravity would have been more to the point; but it may equally be some old hack portent wearily touring the same stands again, a portent dispatched long ago in the hope that now and again it would coincide with striking events.

Portents foretell two main types of phenomena. There are the works of Nature, like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and the larger landslides. These keep everything in the family, as it were, Geology backing up Astronomy. The other type needs some human co-operation; but war, pestilence and assassination rarely let a portent down. An H-bomb test is the point at which man changes from the slave of matter to its master, and it would strike any comet as a real tribute to its predictive powers. After all, its previous picture of life on Earth is likely to be Edwardian or even Hanoverian. As tests are soon going to get so frequent that they sink from headlines to the snippet columns, along with curious nesting-places, it will become difficult for a comet not to predict one. At the moment the H-bomb still has a slight rarity value, but the normal rules that govern the spread of luxuries apply: first only the rich have them but they end up being given away on quiz programmes.

The proliferation of man-made earthquakes is not the only feature of the

immediate future that is going to create confusion in the prophetic world. Court Astrologers who base their choice of a suitable time for a leopard hunt or a battle on heavenly bodies that turn out to be made of plastic and crammed full of electronics are going to lose face and probably much more. Artificial satellites could be used to work on the nerves of a superstitious enemy. After all, Hitler leant heavily on his Astrologer and the Astrologer, no doubt, leant heavily on what he saw through his telescope, assuming he did not simply ignore everything except birthdays like the astrologers in newspapers. Astronomical textbooks will date badly as comets bump into artificial satellites, get the worst of the collision, are pushed off into other orbits and begin to behave quite unexpectedly. Once predicting, they will become unpredicted. The dramatic capture of Comet Brooks by Jupiter shows that even in the past comets could be defeated, but when they are always coming up against bodies incorporating the finest of terrestrial technology they will lose every time. The odds against their staying in their orbit for long will become decreasingly astronomical.

As with the H-bomb, every State will be wanting its own satellite and the sky will become cramped. Satellites will be aimed at the satellites of rivals. Satellites will carry advertising by Boards of Tourism. Some satellites will be camouflaged as something else, large birds, maybe, or jet-planes or witches. There will be so much to watch that there will have to be something on the lines of the *Radio Times*, though without photographs of Terry-Thomas.

The satellites will also be reliably visible. How simple we shall seem to our descendants, we who accept, unquestioning, statements that our comet has been hidden by cloud. The *Daily Telegraph* man on the comet-beat tried Hurstmonceux Observatory and an aeroplane over France without getting a sight of it, but never for a moment suggested in his reports that it was not there. In the future, however, the citizens of any State that is spending the tobacco tax on moons will expect to be able to see them. Assurances by Government spokesmen that they are

screened by the weather will not be enough.

Once this recent comet, this alleged stimulus to early-rising, would have ranked with a two-headed calf or a surly lion. Once it would have affected men's actions and had repercussions in Throgmorton Street. But it is patronizing and shallow to dismiss it as a bit of a bore. Before long we may be looking back to its visit as a golden age. After all, it is an inoffensive heavenly body. It is not betraying our secrets: it is quite useless to our enemies: it is not even radioing back copy to the *Reader's Digest*. It is simply carrying out with unhurried dignity a job that it has carried out often before, conceding nothing to changes in taste and no doubt finding in its approach to the Earth the highspot of its cosmic tour. The mere fact that it has been overtaken by progress does not give us the right to sneer at its homespun virtues or to refer slightly to its lack of transistors, Congressional approval or place in the planned exploitation of the mineral wealth of the Moon.

The Statue and the Pot

Mrs. Jeger (Holborn and St. Pancras, South) asked the Minister of Works whether he was aware that the laurel plant at the foot of Mrs. Pankhurst's statue was lacking in both vitality and beauty; that its container was a disproportionate pot; and whether he would arrange for some more worthy planting or for none at all.

Mr. Molson: The laurel has been replaced by a cineraria.

THE Woman's Cause triumphant now,
Crowned with the laurel on her brow,
Too bad that Mrs. Pankhurst's got
A wholly disproportionate pot.

Pots will be pots, and even granting
The laurel's not a worthy planting,
It has the merit, looking at you,
That it obscures the dreary statue.
The laurel's not so bad. Our quarrel
Is with the thing behind the laurel.

And now they've made it even drearier
By planting it with cineraria.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





Facts for Emigrants

IT is a mistake to assume, as many politicians do, that the quantitative facts of human migration are determined solely by taxation, that the net balance of *'gration (emi minus immi)* reflects the disincentive differential of a particular fiscal system. People migrate for the oddest reasons. Conscience doth not make Cowards of us all.

French girls used to come here, to Britain, to give birth to National Health babies. Athletes sometimes settle overseas to avoid the attentions of harrising journalists. Americans and Central Europeans have been known to adopt British nationality in a burst of enthusiasm for our Third Programme. Australians emigrate to England for the cricket, to Canada for the lack of it. The Irish and the Americans come to Britain to compère TV shows. The Scots fly south seasonally with the locum tenens. And so on and so forth. Even such things as climate, food and rheumatism play their part in the statistical abstract of human transportation.

It would also be a mistake to assume that emigration is unaffected by taxation, and it is with *your* personal problems in mind that I have assembled the following facts and figures. Mr. Thorneycroft's Budget has been kind to what are known as senior executives, so kind that they now keep more of their income than their counterparts in Germany and Sweden. Earning £2,000 a year the Briton with two children and no expense allowance pays about 20 per cent of his salary in tax. The German pays 25 per cent and the Swede 30 per cent. Not bad, eh! Observe, though, that the Canadian pays only 10 per cent, and the American 12 per cent.

If our executive, bursting with incentives, now earns himself another

£1,000 a year he is entitled to keep £600 of it—£200 less than the Canadian and the American, but more than the German, £580, or the Swede, £500.

When we move up to the higher and more rarefied regions we find that the Briton takes the hardest knocks. At £5,000 a year he pays out 38 per cent in tax, and at £10,000 a year, 54 per cent. Americans of commensurate affluence pay the Department of Internal Revenue only 19 per cent and 27 per cent of their total incomes.

It seems therefore that the Chancellor's budgetary measures may well halt the drain of executives and scientists in the £2,000—£5,000 bracket, and at the same time take out the plug for those earning less than £2,000 or more than, say, £10,000. But whether all this is of interest to anyone other than the sociological novelist I would not

care to hazard a hope. Mine own executioner, I intend to stay put.

* * * * *
Courtaulds and British Celanese, faced with competitive giants across the Channel and all the implications of the European Common Market project, have agreed to forget their old and bitter feuding and merge into a colossal £150 million quasi-monopoly. Only time will tell whether this will be to the advantage of consumers of artificial silk, alias rayon, alias Celanese, alias man-made fibres, and to British exports. But the terms of the treaty are undoubtedly attractive to shareholders in British Celanese. The merger will make Courtauld-Celanese the largest producer of man-made fibres in the world. It should also make the smaller fry in the industry very interesting to the speculative investor. MAMMON



A New Land Army

QUIET optimism here and suppressed glee spread through the countryside this week. Spring is not the impulse, nor is our change of mood due to any alteration in the fixed prices of livestock or crops. A bowlful of hope has been handed to us by the Minister of Defence. Now, whenever two or three farmers forgather in the local, we lift our glasses and toast Mr. Duncan Sandys.

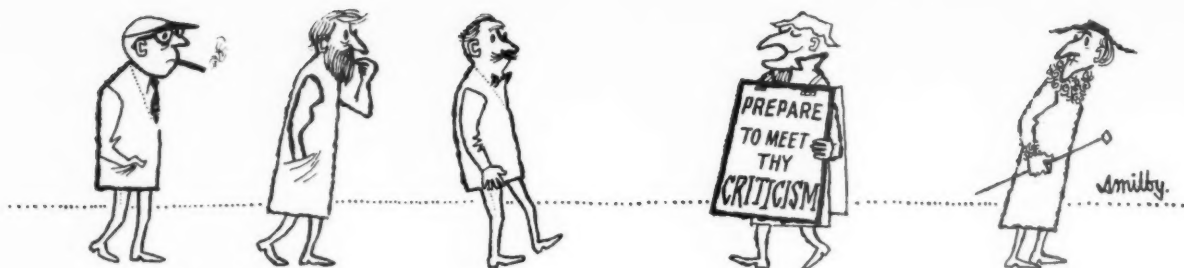
His decision to axe five thousand colonels and majors is nothing less than a bumper harvest for us. At least half of these redundant sahibs will have no other future than to go farming. Like the Church of England, agriculture has always been able to absorb the less talented elements of the population. I mean no disrespect, but no degree or vocation is necessary in either industry. All these retired gentlemen have to do in order to become gentlemen farmers is to buy our farms—at least that is what we shall tell them.

* * * * *
This relief to agriculture has come only just in time. Prices of land had been falling steadily ever since the influx of ex-Indian Civil Servants dried up, though there was a brief rally in the value of small-holdings situated in the Home Counties when the Mau Mau came to our aid and sent a few coffee planters hurrying home to look for poultry farms here.

Estimates of the yield from this harvest vary. Estate agents doodling on their blotters are hastily marking prices up by 20 per cent. Assuming each colonel has £10,000 or can borrow that amount on his pension and that there are five thousand of them, then agriculture gets a windfall of £25,000,000 even on the conservative estimate that only half of them eventually sink to farming.

With this succulent bait before us we spring-clean in earnest: pails of whitewash are flung at our cracking plaster, wormwood beams are burnished with creosote, and on the land itself we hurriedly hang gates and plough our rushes under, then run and top-dress our corn with sulphate of ammonia. That done we rub linseed oil over the coats of our livestock till horses and cattle shine with condition. And if you give the driver of the milk lorry a tip he'll leave a few more empty churns at your gate. Though they remain empty and you never could fill them, they speak oceans when you're showing a colonel round your place. Don't be downcast if he should wriggle off your hook; there are going to be plenty of rear-admirals to follow.

RONALD DUNCAN



BOOKING OFFICE

National Faces

British Historical Portraits: A selection from the National Portrait Gallery with Biographical Notes. Cambridge Press, 18/-

ARCHITECTURALLY speaking, the National Portrait Gallery is one of the most depressing buildings in London—perhaps in Europe—and its interior is designed with almost uncanny skill to be unsuitable for the display of pictures. It should be given over to showing fossils or mechanical models, and the portraits hung in one—or several—of the beautiful eighteenth-century houses which are always being pulled down as useless. However, in the face of insuperable difficulties, the Director, Staff and Trustees put up an heroic effort, and the result is a collection of pictures unlike anything else in the world.

There are some four thousand portraits altogether, about a tenth of which are reproduced here, with short biographical notes at the end. There is always something fascinating about anyone's career reduced to half a dozen lines, e.g. "He repressed the Lollards, reorganized the English navy and was a patron of poets" (Henry V), or "He wrote fifty or more plays, the last of them when he was enjoying the role of internationally famous nonagenarian" (G. B. Shaw). The book is anonymous, but the review slip mentions the name of Miss Barbara Isherwood-Kay, presumably author of this commendable *Who's Who*.

We begin with Henry IV (1367-1413) and end with a conversation piece which includes H.M. the Queen: a stretch of about five hundred and fifty years. The fact that strikes one is that human faces during that period have not altered much; but that what people expected, hoped or feared to find in those faces has varied enormously.

For example, Henry VI, who had a thoroughly uncomfortable life (during which he somehow managed to found Eton and King's) before being murdered is revealed as looking a little like the

novelist, Ronald Firbank: amused, embarrassed, on the point of making a joke no one present will understand: not in the least the grim, ascetic, haggard figure he is usually represented to be.

Kings and statesmen naturally predominate in these early portraits, and not until the seventeenth century does a sprinkling of extraneous persons begin to make itself felt. In the young Edward VI (painting after Holbein) one



can see some hint of a Vandyck romanticism (in the best sense) raising its head, but nothing could be more academic (in the worst sense) than the huge official portraits of Gheeraedts or Mytens before this romantic view of life was accepted.

The great portrait painters of the eighteenth century have naturally found their way, on the whole, into galleries where painting rather than portraiture is the first consideration. Eighteenth century stiffness and formality is therefore emphasized here rather more than if there were a profusion of Gainsborough, Reynolds and the lesser masters, chosen for the picture rather than the subject.

The real decay of portrait painting,

from which this country has never recovered, took place in the nineteenth century. Tissot may not be top rank of artists, but his picture of Colonel Burnaby, "traveller, soldier and balloonist of great linguistic abilities and immense physique," shows that a portrait of skill and charm could perfectly well be painted in 1870. On the whole the latter half of the Victorian age displays its famous men and women in terms of dreadful hideousness and inefficiency.

It is, of course, quite right that these monstrous pictures should be preserved, because, as often as not, the sitter must have chosen the painter; and, in any case, the feebleness and false sentiment of the painter himself is usually of interest.

Our own age has little for self-congratulation in this sphere; though this is perhaps due not so much to failings in the artist as to lack of direction in the contemporary view of what a human being should look like and what expression he should assume. For example, we have a bronze bust of Ramsay MacDonald by Sir Jacob Epstein in that eminent sculptor's characteristic manner executed in 1934; while John Buchan, 1st Lord Tweedsmuir, a near contemporary, is commemorated, also in bronze in 1935, by Mr. Thomas J. Clapperton in naturalistic style that would not have seemed inappropriate to Cicero. It will all be very difficult for posterity to understand. Another riddle is why Prince Rupert of the Rhine, after Lely, was chosen to adorn the wrapper.

ANTHONY POWELL

Gusto

A Piece of My Mind: Reflections at Sixty. Edmund Wilson. W. H. Allen, 15/-

Although each of this collection of miscellaneous pieces is called something large like "Religion" or "Europe" or "Sex," Mr. Wilson is not really happy in generalization. He is not a conversational writer, like Aldous Huxley, though he shares his exuberant reading

and his willingness to tackle any subject under the sun. His strength is in the specific, in bringing his sense of history and society and verbal rhythm to bear on particular poems and novels. He cleans masterpieces of their accretions with an Orwellian gusto. He has a good mind and a fresh mind but not a systematizing, speculative mind.

He includes an ingenious scheme for teaching Latin, some erudition on Jewish subjects—his originality comes out in his refusal as a Gentile to construct a world-picture that omits Hebrew culture—a brilliant autobiographical chapter, a lucid, observant little study of the U.S.A. and a few bad-tempered passages about Europe that are silly because they are humourless Mark Twain. One is not quite sure that his preference for the American bathroom to the Gothic cathedral is really a joke. R. G. G. P.

South from Granada. Seven Years in an Andalusian Village. Gerald Brennan. Hamish Hamilton, 21/-

Soon after the First World War Mr. Brennan tired of civilization and set off, with little money, to Spain. And there, in the South, he discovered Yegen: a primitive mountain village, a brave new tiny world, where women set out with lanterns after dark to charm the snails with singing, where the caper plant burst into huge flowers of pink-and-white, where witches perched like owls on the poplar trees and flew off through the moonlight to hold their meetings on the threshing-floors. Occasionally there came an interruption from Bloomsbury: Lytton Strachey arrived, "sitting side-saddle on a mule, bearded, spectacled, very long and thin, with his coarse red nose, holding an open sunshade above him." Virginia Woolf arrived to "throw off a cascade of words like the notes of a great pianist improvising." But for the most part Mr. Brennan's Andalusian landscape was peopled by strange, uncouth, and often attractive peasants; and landscape and figures are all recalled with brio, affection and a sharp sense of the characteristic, the original and the picturesque. *South from Granada* is engaging and warmly recommended.

J. R.

More Than a Legend. Constance Whyte. Hamish Hamilton, 21/-

The Loch Ness Monster has been a sitting pigeon for the practical joker, and as usual it is the hoaxes and not the proved testimony which has stuck in the public mind. Mrs. Whyte, a doctor who has lived near Inverness for nearly twenty years, has set out to make a sober and thorough collection of all the known facts, and sceptics who read her book are likely to slip a disc in maintaining their position.

The evidence includes good photographs (vetted by experts), many eyewitness accounts by witnesses whose names are given, echo-soundings, and the results of the special observations of

Sir Edward Mountain and Commander R. T. Gould. Two of the creatures have been seen simultaneously. They appear to be forty to fifty feet long, humped, playful and capable of at least 30 m.p.h. Mrs. Whyte makes no attempt to label them, but in view of the cœlacanth why is it unreasonable to suppose that a Lochnessaurus (her name) has equally cleverly survived? E. O. D. K.

Seize the Day. Saul Bellow. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 10/6

"Tommy Wilhelm, forty-four years old, father of two sons," married but living apart from his wife, is the epitome of the middle-aged American mixed-up kid. Having failed to become a Hollywood star in youth, and resigned from his job as a sales executive, he engages in a perpetual duel with his bland, rich, impersonal old father and plunges desperately into a stock-market deal with a loquacious confidence trickster who poses as a psychiatrist (even the colour of his cheques is untrustworthy). Swindled out of his remaining capital, unable to pay the hotel bill, he is last seen sobbing his heart out at a stranger's funeral. 'This study in futility, a long-short-story rather than a novel, is elegant, clever and extremely well-written; but like the life of its protagonist it lacks point and purpose and, from the author of *Augie March*, comes as a great disappointment; one can only hope that it merely marks an intermediate stage in the development of Mr. Bellow's career.

J. M-R.

Siren Land and Fountains in the Sand. Norman Douglas. Secker and Warburg, 30/-

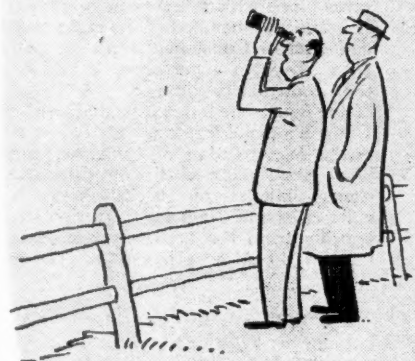
These are Norman Douglas's first two travel books, brought together in one volume: an excellent arrangement. The former deals with the neighbourhood of Naples (1911) and the latter with North Africa (1912). When he came to revise and comment on his early work Douglas remarked that some of the incidents and characters in *Fountains in the Sand* were the product of *Kif*-smoking, rather than actual experience; but they are none the less entertaining for that reason. However much Douglas's writing and personality have been under fire of late years, his travel books are still well worth reading.

A. P.

Stars and Markets. Sir Charles Tennyson. Chatto and Windus, 21/-

The Tennysons have never reacted into depreciation of their great ancestor, nor have they lived off his fame. They have made reputations in a number of spheres, including cricket and commerce, and they have also taken their duties to scholarship seriously. Sir Charles's biography of Tennyson is, as far as I know, the best book on a major English writer ever written by a descendant.

In writing this agreeable autobiography he sensibly realizes that his



Hollowood

"A new comet's supposed to mean wise men in the East, but of course it doesn't name them."

recollection of his grandfather, and of his stepfather, Augustine Birrell, will interest the reader. Then he continues to talk simply, firmly and light-heartedly about a number of aspects of modern English history I have not met in an autobiography before. Eton, King's, Lincoln's Inn and the Colonial Office were followed by the F.B.I. and Dunlops. He has played an important part in developing industrial education, studying labour relations and encouraging and steering the movement for improving industrial design. He has also struggled with the woes of the film industry. He is a man of projects and ingenuity, John Evelyn in Big Business. R. G. G. P.

AT THE PLAY

King John (STRATFORD)
Titus Andronicus and
The Comedy of Errors (OLD VIC)
Tea and Sympathy (COMEDY)
The Balcony (THE ARTS)
Janus (ALDWYCH)
Harmony Close (LYRIC)

SO far as *King John* can be set in focus, Douglas Seale does so at Stratford in a sensible production which flows surely and brings its characters to an unusual degree of life. The most successful—indeed, memorably good—is the Bastard, played splendidly by Alec Clunes, whose bearing and resolution are lightly masked by gaiety. No one

can doubt that John has a better henchman than he deserves, but in Robert Harris's *King*, until he is overwhelmed by his own weakness, there is a sympathetic quality which partly justifies this loyalty. Mr. Harris makes the decline interesting, and the scene where he gives Hubert his murderous instructions is beautifully handled. The real passion and grief of Constance seems to escape Joan Miller in a performance which is too immediately intense. A slightly comic figure—was this intended?—Mark Dignam's papal legate openly enjoys the astute manipulation of spineless kings. Two small parts cutting a disproportionate notch are Patrick Wymark's chief citizen of Angiers, answering back sturdily from the battlements, and the spirited Spanish princess of Doreen Aris.

For William's birthday the Old Vic put on a *Titus Andronicus* that was punctuated by the queasier of the audience passing out, followed as sal volatile by *The Comedy of Errors* rattled off in a romp. The *Titus* looks much less a soldier than a member of the French Academy, but Derek Godfrey survives this handicap majestically in an honest performance. Robert Helpmann is too prim and trim as Saturninus; Barbara Jefford succeeds in finding the tigress in Tamora; and the nearest to the

now classic standard of last year's Stratford production is Keith Michell's subtly abominable Aaron. Allowing for nervous reaction to *Titus*, I thought *The Comedy of Errors* surprisingly funny, in particular Robert Helpmann's antic Pinch. Both plays are directed by Walter Hudd.

Tea and Sympathy, by Robert Anderson, is based on the incredible premise that a boy of eighteen at a boarding school is vague about homosexuality. Its hero, the only member of his American school with a civilized haircut, plays tennis and the lute, but not football; a quiet introspective outside the inarticulate, chest-punching fraternity of reg'lar fellas. Innocent association with a not so innocent master arouses suspicion and persecution; his only comfort is his housemaster's wife, herself unhappy with a husband on the borderline of sex. Her love brings the boy back to sanity when, seeking to prove his manhood, he falls into deeper disgrace. It is a superficial play, written very competently on the level of a magazine story; what might have been a fascinating discussion of a real problem is lost in the wholly sentimental treatment of the boy and the woman—whose relationship would surely have caused a major scandal. The acting is good, and so is John Fernald's production. Elizabeth Sellars plays the

wife with well-judged feeling, and Tim Seely the boy in a commendably natural and sensitive performance; while as the boy's father John McLaren gives an alarming idea of how the cult of forced manliness can addle a rather pleasant character.

At the last moment Jean Genet publicly dissociated himself from the Arts production, by Peter Zadek, of his play *The Balcony*, translated by Bernard Frechtman. Still, whatever is missing of his intentions, he wrote it; and it can never have been a good play. He is a serious dramatist, unfortunately suffering from some kind of carbuncle on his imagination. In return for a few able speeches on the nature of power and one perceptive scene in which two women discuss men's dependence on illusion, we have to sit through a rambling series of sketches demonstrating ad nauseam the erotic perversions on tap for the witless customers of a fancy brothel, and we have to listen to words which M. Genet, intermittently a very small boy, might more gracefully have scribbled on a wall. These curious goings-on run side by side with a revolution, in which the customers are obliged to assume the responsibilities of their imagined identities. This fantasy becomes infinitely tedious, and it is a pity, because M. Genet can write. The acting is not up to much, except for Selma Vaz Dias as the madame and Helena Hughes and Hazel Penwarden as two of her strangely dedicated flock.

Janus, by Carolyn Green, is richer in situations than most of the American comedies we have seen lately, but does disappointingly little with them. The title comes from the pseudonym of a pair of lovers, both married, who meet secretly in New York for two months each summer to concoct best-selling historical novels. He, Peter Sallis, a dry little teacher, provides the facts, while she, Googie Withers, distorts them into the most saleable bedroom shapes. This idyll, enormously profitable though they have no use for money, is broken by her husband and a suspicious tax-collector; and having up to that point shown originality Miss Green then falls back on a long and unconvincing attempt by the distracted wife, who imagines she loves both men, to go on getting the best of both worlds. The writing isn't up to such a test, and for all the charm and variety of Miss Withers—no mean weapons—the play grows palpably thin, though Lionel Harris's production disguises this where it can. Peter Sallis is engagingly ingenuous, John McCallum solidly the tycoon husband, Barbara Couper full of satiric attack as a literary agent, and Gerald Cross amusingly ossified by fiscal problems.

A very mild English musical, *Harmony Close* describes without distinction the loves, aspirations and scandals of a



Constance—JOAN MILLER King John—ROBERT HARRIS Philip—ALEC CLUNES

London mews inhabited by highly improbable characters. Poor acting is partly redeemed by Rose Hill as a night-club queen (though why does she speak Cockney and sing Knightsbridge?) and Bernard Cribbins as a reluctant painter of Brighton postcards.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Zuleika (Saville—24/4/57), delightful new musical that keeps faith with Max. *Plaintiff in a Pretty Hat* (St. Martin's—24/10/56), witty light comedy. *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57), epilogue for a good dinner.

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE PICTURES

Twelve Angry Men
Designing Woman

I SAID the other week something about the powerful grip, even on the spectator, of an argument. It is demonstrated again for a solid hour and a half in *Twelve Angry Men* (Director: Sidney Lumet), which by the simplest possible means, without the aid of any of the modern decorations—no colour, no wide screen, no cheesecake (no women, even), no variety of scene, only one big star—succeeds in being the most hypnotically gripping thing I ever saw in my life.

Not merely gripping at the time; an ordinary suspense thriller can be that, and you quite expect and are resigned to the let-down feeling at the end: that's that, it's all over, ah well, wonder what's on next week. This one, besides continuously tightening its hold on your attention throughout ninety minutes, is also intelligently satisfying and lives in the mind, and its characters go on living in the mind.

There are twelve of them, all men, members of a jury, and I can visualize them all and hear their voices now. The film begins as they file out of court after listening to the evidence in a murder trial, and settle down in their room, relaxing, opening windows (it is very hot), beginning to smoke, and taking their places round the table. Eleven of them are assuming it's just a formality; the case was obvious enough, wasn't it? Let's agree on a Guilty verdict and get out of here.

One man, Juror No. 8 (Henry Fonda), has "a reasonable doubt," and the film is simply the story of how the others, down to the most bitterly antagonistic of them all (Lee J. Cobb), come—by way of passionate argument—to agree with him. The details of the case emerge as they talk; by the end of the picture, we know as much as if we had been in court. And we have been in the jury room exactly as long as they have—there are no flashbacks or fades indicating lapse of time.

There are in fact no distractions whatever: no camera tricks except



Juror No. 8—HENRY FONDA

Juror No. 3—LEE J. COBB

familiar ones, the ordinary language of the cinema, used with unobtrusive perfection. Here is a team of good actors, each given the chance to establish an individual character, in an admirably-written argument; that's all. To people who have formulated their own rigid rules of taste ("I don't like pictures with a lot of talk, I'd hate anything with no love interest") this description may be damning. I can only emphasize that anybody, anybody at all with any intelligence and any interest in people, will be held absolutely by this, utterly engrossed in it, without afterwards sheepishly wondering why. See it—and from the beginning.

I'm surprised to note a certain superciliousness and lack of enthusiasm in some published opinions of *Designing Woman* (Director: Vincente Minnelli). It is the literal truth that I have not laughed so much, with such completely relaxed enjoyment, at anything for years.

An outline of the story gave me no hint that this would happen; nor indeed did the first half-hour or so of the film itself. It begins as a pleasant romantic comedy, founded on the idea of contrast: after a very hasty marriage, she finds that her world and his are totally different. He (Gregory Peck) is a newspaper sports-writer; she (Lauren Bacall) is "New York's top fashion designer." One can regard this set-up with suspicion as contrived, a formula device to pack in both kinds of audience, but the test is the final result. As it explores the possibilities of the situation the film gets steadily funnier. He is first disconcerted

by the squealing smart characters at a "surprise party" of her friends; then he takes her to a prize-fight ("What do I wear?") and she shrinkingly encounters some of his. So it goes on, with many such group scenes brilliantly directed—a TV rehearsal, a reading for a stage show while "the boys" sullenly try to concentrate on their poker game within earshot, a fashion show. There are one or two wonderfully funny characters, but more important are the richness of comic detail, the skilful placing and piling-up of incident in an ingenious and witty script (by George Wells), and the handling of those group scenes.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Also shown this time was *The Day They Gave Babies Away*, misleading title for a simple family story of the eighteenth-century in the Middle West, sentimental but a remarkably effective tear-jerker (by the end, even at the press show, noses were being blown *passim*). Several miraculously well-directed children. The beautiful Italian travel picture *The Lost Continent* (24/4/57) continues, with the simple, touching and also Italian *Friends for Life*. Others still available: *Yangtze Incident* (17/4/57) and *Lust for Life* (20/3/57). Stop Press: *Funny Face* is terrific—more next week.

Two new releases to mention are *Their Secret Affair* (3/4/57), slick, trivial but very entertaining, and *Doctor at Large* (20/3/57), a second sequel but gay and full of good character-sketches.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Warning to Wantons

DENIS MITCHELL, who arranged, recorded, produced and (with Roy Harris) wrote the film script of the B.B.C.s documentary "In Prison," explained in a foreword that it was the programme's aim to give merely an impression of life in Strangeways Gaol. Any reasonable criticism of the film should therefore ignore the deep lacunæ in documentation, the questions that were not posed and the answers that were not given, and concentrate on the quality of mood engendered in the viewer.

On the whole, I think, the film was a success. This was prison as most of us, in our extra-mural smugness, have always imagined it—dank, gloomy, gruesomely forbidding and institutional, and without hope. It confirmed our worst fears, and as propaganda for the straight and narrow path it must have been unprettily effective.

I quarrel with the producer at two points. In retrospect it seems to me that the programme made less use than it should have done of purely visual material. The pervading atmosphere of seediness, idleness and hopelessness was suggested almost exclusively by means of sonic stimuli: the hollow metallic clanging of doors, cages and keys, the measured shuffling tread of the prisoners, the loud ticking of clocks and ringing of bells—these sounds, rather than the pictures of cells and galleries and buckets and hands, set the scene and chilled the cockles of the heart. The physical proportions of Strangeways are no doubt unfriendly to the cameraman and his lighting



PHIL SILVERS

SOPHIE TUCKER

equipment, but much more could have been done, I think, by slow tracking and panning shots to suggest the relentless walled incarceration of the prisoner's field of vision. We looked at the inmates when it would have been more moving to look through them.

Which leads me to my second point of censure. It has become one of the clichés of TV documentation to decapitate the human raw material of social inquiry—crooks, hospital patients and so on—and screen only awkward shots of backs, hands and feet. (The trick is also used in "Is This Your Problem?") Now, quite obviously, there are good reasons why prisoners should not be paraded recognizably before the goggling millions of television, but equally there are good reasons why television should not play a degrading game of script-tease with these unfortunates. Nothing is gained, except the goodwill of sensation-mongers, by depicting people who have to remain

defaced: and the tiresome stratagems employed to hide identity are no more acceptable than the vulgar circumlocutions sometimes used to avoid a strong Anglo-Saxon home-truth.

Another reason is that unusual camera techniques are always apt to hog the programme. For many viewers "In Prison" was merely a peep-show that didn't quite deliver the goods. Looking for criminal faces to go with the hands and limbs and voices, wondering how generous the producer would be with his next shot and how much the cameramen could see, they lost the main mood and the programme's important message. This was a documentary that needed no added dramatic realism. Long shots of the

convicts at work and play, and physical details of the prison as seen through their eyes—all this would have been quite enough.

The post-mortem on the programme, "Scales of Justice," also achieved a limited success. Sir Norman Birkett and company discussed penal reform very eloquently—so eloquently indeed that some of the set speeches seemed over-rehearsed and somewhat spiritless.

I shall not be sorry when the football season is over and that dreadful B.B.C. programme "Up for the Cup" hangs up its boots. And I shall not exactly weep over the last rites of "The Eamonn Andrews Show" (with or without Sophie Tucker). As for the "Phil Silvers Show," an American export, I can only say at present that we are threatened with a whole series of it. Do we have to accept comedies of life in the U.S. army along with rocket projectiles and atomic warheads? BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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